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Week End Novels. 2d

EVERY WEEK

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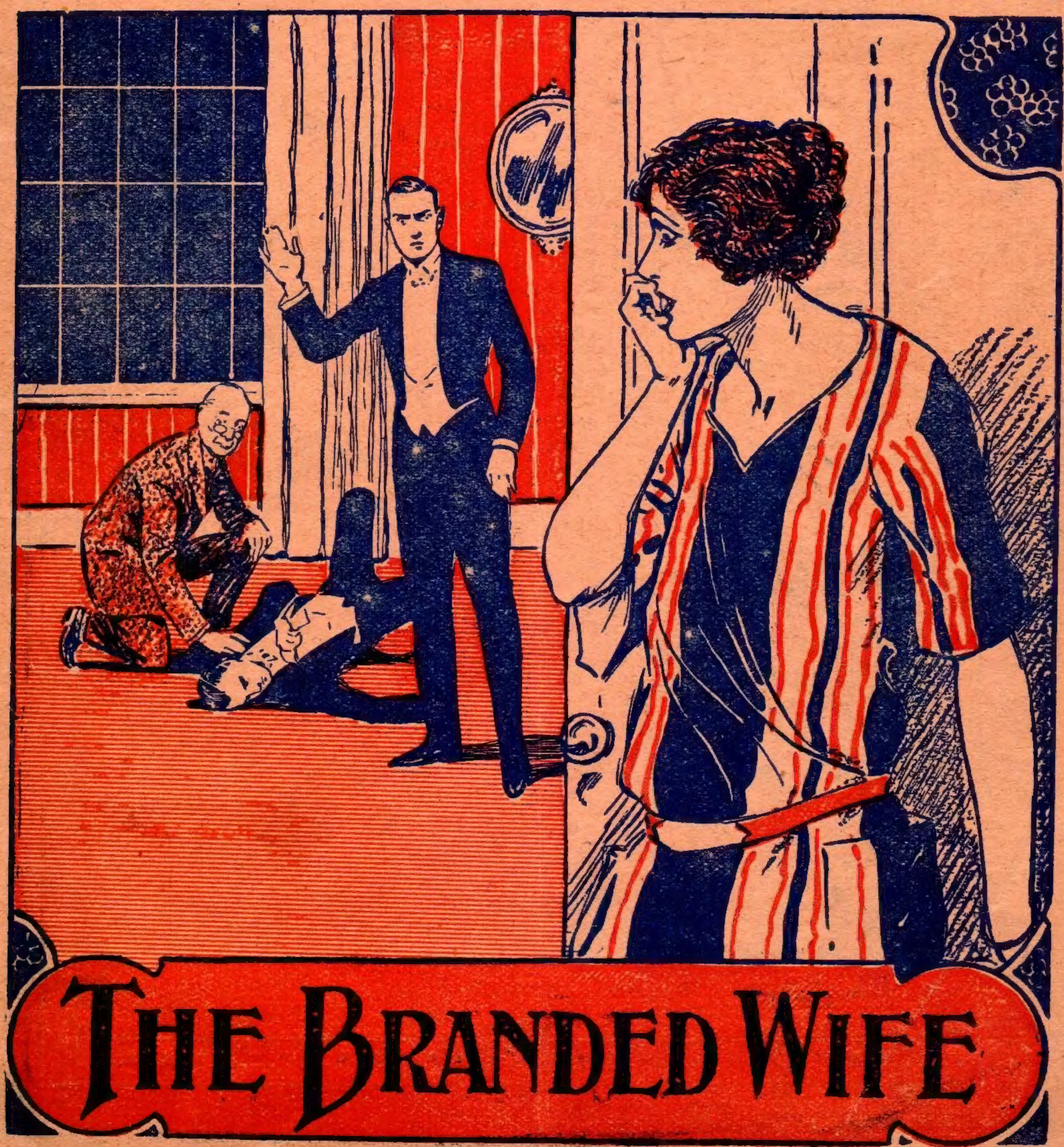

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A Remarkable New Serial Romance—the Story of a Love over which Fell the Shadow of Shame.

By MURIEL NELSON.

Just for Once.

RAY HERRICK was singing.

Her voice, low but clear and sweet, drifted out through the open windows to mingle with the hot July sunshine out of doors. Her song was a little old-fashioned, a trifle out of date, but she was hardly conscious of the words. She sang because she was young and the sun was shining and because in a few minutes Richard Meryon would almost certainly be here.

The sun, peeping in through the low, mullioned windows of the gloomy, rambling old inn that stood at the mountain foot, caught the bright gold of her hair and set it burning with a hundred lights. It seemed as though it were the clean flame of her youth that lit up the dingy bar-parlour, as she moved about, placing a bowl of wild flowers upon the tall mantelpiece, or settling the white muslin curtains that had provoked her stepfather's bitter scorn.

"*One little kiss, a little kiss*——" again her voice rose in the soft, haunting refrain as she glanced up at the old-fashioned grandfather clock in the corner. He hadn't missed coming in about this time one day this week . . ." *one little*——" she broke off suddenly as she felt herself seized roughly from behind.

"That's just what I want, my beauty!" said a man's thick voice in her ear. "'Tisn't often I get the luck these days to come upon you alone!"

A man's hot breath was on her neck, his clutching fingers were hot against her arm under the sleeve of her thin white muslin dress. She was being strained tight against the rough cloth of his suit that smelt strongly of tobacco and horses.

Ray twisted herself round in the newcomer's grasp, beating him off with her two small hands. A red face bent gloatingly over her own, two small eyes that were glazed with passion devoured her with a burning gaze.

"Let me go!" she cried furiously. "Mr. Harkness, how dare you touch me!"

The man laughed and pulled her closer. "*One little kiss, a little kiss!*" he sang the refrain of her own song, laughing delightedly at her struggles. "Give me a kiss of your own free will, my beauty, or dash it if I don't take it and a hundred more for company!"

She tried to free herself, but by sheer brute strength he held her, his great bulk towering above her slender form. His thick lips were almost touching hers now. A wave of nausea and anger swept through her.

"Let me go!" she screamed. "I won't kiss you, I—I hate you! Let me——"

Her words were strangled in the touch of his moustache, but before his lips did more than brush hers the man relaxed his grasp so suddenly that she staggered and nearly fell.

"You swine!" cried another voice that made Ray's heart give a sudden leap, "what do you mean by trying to kiss Miss Herrick against her will?"

The big, red-faced man staggered back, holding his jaw where the newcomer had caught him a hefty blow. "What the hell——" he began furiously, then catching sight of his assailant, his manner grew suddenly conciliatory.

"I'm sure I didn't mean the lass no harm," he muttered. "Most of them don't object to a snatched kiss or two, Mr. Meryon, as you'll find out when you're my age, if you haven't discovered it already."

"I should have thought it was pretty evident that Miss Herrick, at any rate, objected," observed

All the characters in the stories printed in this paper are fictitious, the names do not refer to any living person or persons.

Richard Meryon grimly. "Clear out, Harkness! You'd better go while the going's good."

The big, red-faced man snatched up his hat which had fallen off in the struggle and dusted it carefully.

"Oh! all right, Mr. Meryon," he said sulkily. "I'm sure I don't want to force my company where it ain't wanted. I'd a certain proposition to put up to this young lady, but seemingly I'd better wait for another time." Settling his hat upon his head in an aggrieved manner he stalked slowly from the room.

Richard Meryon turned towards the girl. He was a young man of middle height, athletic and wiry of build, without an ounce of superfluous flesh upon his bones. His lean, rather long face was tanned to a healthy sunburn, his eyes dark grey and rather deeply set, his mouth well-cut and generally smiling, and his chestnut hair broke into little crinkles no matter how hard and vigorously he brushed it back from his forehead. A handsome, pleasant, well-set-up young man of seven or eight-and-twenty, to whom life had been more than usually kind, and who found the world a very pleasant place indeed.

"I'm awfully sorry that that brute annoyed you, Miss Herrick," he said, letting his eyes dwell upon the girl for a moment with evident admiration.

Ray's face was flushed and her eyes sparkling as she put up her hands involuntarily to rearrange her golden hair. It was impossible not to notice the slim, budding grace of her young figure in its white frock that had all the simplicity and allure of native good taste. Richard Meryon found his eyes following the long lines of her throat, the firm, rounded chin, the straight little nose, and the low, broad forehead on whose whiteness her dark eye-brows showed like two finely-pencilled lines. He found himself wondering, as he had wondered several times in the past week, exactly what colour were the large eyes underneath those dark curling lashes. Sometimes they were blue, sometimes green like the sea, and, like the sea, too, giving promise both of smiling calms and sudden, dark tempests. He recalled himself suddenly from such dangerous speculations, conscious that the girl was speaking.

"I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Meryon," she was saying a little breathlessly.

"It's lucky I happened to be about," returned the young man carelessly. "Harkness daren't get too much the wrong side of me because of my uncle up at the Hall. Your father ought not to leave you here alone at the mercy of any cad who happens to come in."

Ray turned away her head. His careless mention of his uncle, old Sir Michael Meryon up at Coverdale Hall, had stung deep. She told herself it was a fortunate reminder though he hadn't meant it as such. It would not do to forget that this man was the heir to a baronetcy while she was the step-daughter of a country innkeeper. . . A sudden mistiness filled her eyes and quickly she turned her head so that he might not see. Why, in the eyes of most of the villagers she ought to have been flattered that George Harkness, the horse-dealer from over in Milnesthorpe, condescended to notice her.

But he was speaking again. "Come for a bit of a run in my car," he was urging her, his eyes still watching her with an admiration that made her tremble, "it's a grand afternoon for a spin."

Ray shook her head. "I can't. You see, I'm in charge. Mrs. Lawford, the housekeeper, is ill in bed, and Father's gone over to Milnesthorpe and won't be back to-night. There's only me and Jimmy here, and he's gone to the doctor's to fetch Mrs. Lawford's medicine. There'll be a lot of people in a bit later."

She gave a little sigh of distaste, and her glance went wistfully out of doors to where the white road wound by up into the heart of the blue, heat-misted hills. "I'd have loved to come," she added quietly.

The man bent forward to look into her face. "Then come after closing time," he urged, "it's going to be a topping night, and you say the old man isn't at home to make a fuss. I promise I won't keep you out late. I'll have the car out and waiting for you at the cross-roads at half-past nine. Say you'll come."

Something within her leapt at the proposal, but she shrank from it. He would never be anything to her, this man—never could be. She ought to avoid him instead of going out with him. . . .

"It's my last chance," he said eagerly. "You see, I'm going back to London to-morrow."

"Oh!" she gave a little gasp. All the colour drained from her face and then came flooding back. It was as though all at once the sunshine had gone cold and a bitter east wind passed over the flowers, turning them black and dead.

A couple of villagers came clumping into the little sanded room. Mechanically Ray moved to attend to their wants and answered their jocular remarks. It was five minutes before she came back to Richard Meryon.

He glanced at his watch. He had to be getting back to dinner at the Hall with his uncle. "Will you come?" he asked her again.

The last time she would see him. The words kept hammering in her brain. "Only this once—only this once!" Ray nodded her golden head. "Yes," she answered in a low voice, "I'll be there."

Would the time never pass? She asked herself that question a hundred times that evening as she moved amongst her stepfather's customers, supplying their wants, answering their attempts at heavy compliments. Twice she went to see if the clock had stopped. And yet, did she want the time to pass so quickly? Because that brought her nearer to the morning, when he would start for London. . .

"It's closing time, Miss Ray." It was Jimmy who reminded her when at last the longed-for hour had come, so deeply sunk was she in her dreams—Jimmy, the half-idiot boy who would have cheerfully laid down his life to save her the smallest unhappiness.

At last! With a sigh of heartfelt relief Ray shut and locked the door after the last loth reveller had been assisted across the threshold by the assiduous Jimmy. She ran upstairs to see that the sick housekeeper had all she required, and then, slipping the key of the side-door in her pocket, let herself out and sped through the dusk, like a frail white night butterfly, across the heath to the cross-roads.

Meryon was awaiting her. He was in evening

dress she noticed—another sign of that unsurmountable barrier between them! He helped her into the slim grey car and took his place beside her. He let in the clutch and the car, with a low, purring sound, moved forward.

Ray lay back against the luxurious cushions as if in a trance. If she had tried to speak, the words would have choked her. It was enough that she was here beside him, feeling the roughness of his sleeve from time to time when a sharp turn of his hand on the steering-wheel brought him nearer. And Meryon also seemed to have no desire to break the silence.

It was a breathless night following a day of unusual heat. The sky spread above them like the dark velvet of a pansy, the peaks and hills about them loomed dark and mysterious. There was no moon and only a few stars showed their points of silver in the heavens. It was as though all nature were holding its breath—waiting. . . .

And then suddenly the storm was upon them. A sudden gust of wind tore down the valley, bending the few sparse trees almost to earth, and then the rain in a solid sheet, a violet flickering of lightning and the deafening artillery of the thunder.

Meryon slowed down the car and turned. "We must take shelter," he shouted in Ray's ear: "there is a hut further down; we passed it a little time ago. We will go back there until this passes over."

The car sped forward once again, returning in its tracks. The driving rain blinded them so that they could not see where they were going. They rounded a corner. Came a terrific jolt and Ray felt herself thrown clear of the car on to a soft patch of grass at the side of the road. A blinding flash of lightning the next moment revealed a tree trunk that lay across the path, uprooted by the fury of the storm.

For a moment Ray lay breathless and dazed, the life beaten out of her by the wind. Meryon's voice came to her through the darkness. "Ray, Ray, where are you? For God's sake speak to me."

And then before she could find breath to answer he was down on his knees by her side, his hands groping for her. He found her and folded her in his arms. "Ray, little Ray," he whispered hoarsely, "tell me you're not hurt!"

He strained her close against him, conscious of every line of her slim figure through her soaked clothing. His lips sought her wet face. It was as though the storm had unleashed in him the demons of passion also. "Ray, little Ray," he kept on repeating.

And Ray lay against him in a state of ecstatic happiness. If she could she would have prolonged this hour for ever. Her eyes were closed as she lay cradled in his strength.

"Ray," he whispered again. "Look at me, speak to me!"

Her eyes opened slowly. The man drew a long breath of relief. "Thank God!" he exclaimed.

It was his impulse to crush her against him again and kiss her lips until he had dragged her very soul from them, then something bade him pause. While she was unconscious and he had thought maybe that she was dead, it was excusable that he should have let himself go. But now instinct told him that if he kissed her again she would surrender her lips to him gladly. And it wasn't as if he could ever marry her—an innkeeper's daughter! He wasn't in love with her. It was only that her pretty face had proved a distraction for a boresome holiday in the country, cut off as he had been, from all his usual pursuits.

"Clear out!" commanded Richard.

Something chivalrous in Richard Meryon revolted against the impulse that stirred him. He would not take advantage of her helplessness. He would not sink to the level of that swine who had

tried to kiss her this afternoon. He would not smirch her.

"Thank God you're alive, Miss Herrick," he said in a more ordinary voice. "For the moment I got an awful scare, thinking you might have been killed when we barged into that accursed tree. Do you think you're all right—no bones broken? Try to stand. Can you manage it?"

The girl was conscious at once of the change in him, and she fell back from heaven to earth. "I—I think I'm all right," she panted; "it was just the shock that stunned me for the moment." Leaning upon his shoulder she rose to her feet. "It's all right," she said shakily; "I'm not hurt, Mr. Meryon."

The storm had swept on, leaving the calm of desolation in its track. Meryon regarded the car ruefully by the light of one of its lamps.

"I'm afraid there's nothing for it but to leave the car and walk back," he said. "We'll never get it past that infernal tree. Do you think you're fit for walking, Miss Herrick?"

She accepted it for the wearisome anti-climax she knew it to be, but anything was better than to lose him. He insisted upon wrapping his coat around her shoulders that were bare except from the sodden rags of her muslin frock. He talked with cheery determination all the way.

"I shall always remember this holiday of mine, Miss Herrick, and the jolly little talks we've had together. If ever you come to London you must be sure to let me know, and if ever I can do anything to help you you've only to ask. You know that voice of yours is too good to be buried for ever in a little Derbyshire village. . . ."

They said good-bye at last with a commonplace shake of the hand. Richard Meryon, with head down and hands thrust into his pockets, made his way back to the mansion that would one day be his. He was conscious of a glow of inward virtue that he hadn't taken advantage of her helplessness to take kisses that she would have afterwards regretted giving. After all, she had been unconscious when he had been making a fool of himself over her; she had not heard the words of love that had poured from his lips.

Of course, she would soon forget him. Richard knew the faint prickings of remorse. Still, after all, what had he done? Nothing but talk to her in the bar parlour of her stepfather's inn! It was true he had somehow got into the habit of drifting in every day just to talk to her, but what of that? Until to-day he had never once asked her to go out with him. No his conscience was clear.

But all the same it was a good thing he was not staying any longer at Coverdale.

She was a pretty little thing, a dear little thing, and he would have hated to make her unhappy.

The Way of Escape.

RICHARD MERYON had been gone now for three days, and simultaneously the spell of summer weather that had accompanied his visit had vanished in the track of the thunderstorm. In the shadow of the Derbyshire hills it was bleak and cold, and a dull greyness had settled over the whole countryside. It was like her life, Ray said sadly to herself, which would never be warmed again by the sun of Meryon's presence.

Richard Meryon.

But this morning a letter had come from him. It had been brought to her by the faithful Jimmy, with many nods and winks enjoining secrecy. "I got it from postie myself, Miss Ray," he told her in a hoarse whisper, as, looking round like a conspirator to see that they were not observed, he handed over the letter with the London postmark. "I knew if *he'd* got hold of it you'd never 'a' been allowed to see it."

She had patted his hand and thanked him and retired upstairs to her room up under the eaves to gloat over her treasure.

There wasn't much in it. Meryon hoped that she had taken no harm from her wetting that night.

Again he repeated that, if ever she came to London, she was to let him know, and that if ever she should be in need of help, she was to look upon him as her friend, and that he would always do anything in his power to help her. And he remained hers very sincerely, Richard Meryon.

Not much food in that for a hungry heart! But Ray put the letter to her soft red lips and read it over and over until she knew its every word by heart. She could not call this the end of a dream, because she had never for one moment thought of his marrying her. She had been content to go on basking in the sunshine of his presence, resolutely refusing to face the future in the happiness of his society. It was enough that he offered to be her friend.

A harsh voice, calling impatiently up the staircase awakened her from her dream.

"Ray—Ray! Where's the lass hiding herself? Come down at once."

"I'm coming." Hastily she thrust the precious letter into the bosom of her dress and descended the stairs, running along the stone passage to the cold, forbidding parlour where her stepfather was awaiting her. Ezra Pringle was a big, dark-faced, dark-haired man with small, cunning eyes set close together under his narrow forehead, bad-tempered, avaricious and greedy. Often, watching him, Ray had wondered how her mother, the sweet-faced woman whom she remembered only as a sweet, gracious presence, could have brought herself to marry this forbidding man in whose presence all warmth and beauty seemed to die away.

He was waiting for her now in the damp room

with the glass shades and stiff mahogany furniture that had been the scene of many a thrashing in her younger days. Now, to her dismay, Ray perceived that he was not alone.

On the table in the centre of the room stood a tray with a bottle of wine and two glasses. And standing opposite her, so that his big bulk almost obscured the light from the window, was George Harkness.

Ray ignored the latter. "You wanted me?" she said coldly to her stepfather.

"Aye. I wanted you." The innkeeper jerked his head in the direction of the window. "Do you not see George Harkness?"

Ray did not turn her eyes. "I have nothing to say to Mr. Harkness," she replied with cold distinctness.

The innkeeper, with an oath, rapped on the table "Then you'll find something to say to him fine and quickly, my lass. George Harkness has ridden over to see me to ask for you to be his wife."

"His wife!" the girl caught her breath with a sensation of faintness. She was conscious of Harkness's eyes devouring her with a gloating, possessive glance, a glance that made her turn hot and cold. "Then Mr. Harkness has made his journey in vain," she answered, and turned away towards the door.

But her stepfather gripped her tightly by the shoulder. "Not so fast you minx," he snarled. "Who do you think you are to turn up your nose at Mr. Harkness's offer of marriage? Wasn't your mother my wife—aye, and glad to be so? Who was your father, I'd like to know, and what have his people ever done for you? Haven't I taken you, another man's brat, and brought you up as if you'd been my own? Haven't I kept you all these years like a lady, never soiling your hands with hard work? Dare to refuse Mr. Harkness's offer and I'll lay my whip across your back!"

"No, no, Ezra," interrupted the horse-dealer, speaking for the first time. "No violence! And please don't speak to the lass in my presence like that. Listen, Miss Ray," he moved towards her with a conciliatory movement, "I own I was wrong the other day to try and kiss you as I did. As a decent girl you were right to resent it. But I swear even then I was going to ask you to marry me that very afternoon if that young cub Meryon hadn't chosen to interfere in what wasn't his concern. A man oughtn't to kiss a good girl before asking her to marry him. But I meant you no disrespect, and I'm anxious to make you Mrs. George Harkness. You'll be somebody in Milnesthorpe then my girl, I can tell you! You shall have a big house there and a trap and a neat little gee of your own. You'll have the parson's wife and the doctor's wife and the bank-manager's wife all calling on you, and you'll have George Harkness as your loving husband and most obedient slave!" he ended with a self-satisfied smirk.

Ray Herrick.

The girl put up her hand to her forehead. "I'm sorry, all that doesn't appeal to me," she answered coldly, "I am sorry I must refuse your offer, Mr. Harkness."

The big horse-dealer's red face turned a purplish colour. He took out his coloured handkerchief and wiped his forehead. "I've taken you a bit by surprise I reckon Miss Ray," he said with an uneasy smile, "best take a day to think it over.'

"It won't make any difference," she declared coldly, then some queer innate fear took possession of her, "I—I wouldn't marry you—not if you were the last man in the world!" she panted, then rushed blindly from the room, up to the shelter of her own little attic under the eaves.

But not before she had seen the look of thwarted rage that contracted the man's features. "You'll regret that. You'll take that back on your bended knees!" he shouted after her and his voice was thick with rage and baffled passion.

Ray sank down shivering upon her bed. She was afraid of George Harkness now that Meryon was no longer here to protect her from his unwelcome attentions. She seemed to smell again that rough smell of tobacco and horses, to feel again his hot breath on her neck and on her lips as she had done that afternoon when he had tried to kiss her. Here in this house in this remote village, she was so alone, so defenceless. If he found her alone again how could she hope to prevail against his enormous brute strength? His wife . . .! She hid her face in her hands.

The door of her room was thrown abruptly open and her stepfather stood before her. His face was dark with an almost diabolical anger which she had seen before when he had been drinking too much. He raised his hand as though to threaten her.

"You little slut!" he hissed in a voice that was cold with fury, "like your precious mother, thinking yourself better than everyone else around you! If you think you can play fast and loose with George Harkness you'll find you're mistaken. Do you reckon that your fancy man from London, Sir Michael Meryon's nephew, is going to marry you? I tell you you'll take George Harkness's offer while it's good, or I'll thrash you within an inch of your life and put you to the door. Do you hear what I say?"

Ray stood up pale but defiant, her lips set in a determined line, her pale gold hair tossed back from her white forehead. "Yes, I hear what you say, Ezra Pringle. I hear you insulting my mother. But I warn you, nothing that you can say will make me change my mind. I won't marry George Harkness."

"Oh, you won't, won't you?" the man gave a harsh, mocking laugh, "well, he's coming for his answer to-morrow night, so I reckon you'd better think better of it by that time. I've warned you what will happen if you're so dead set on refusing."

He drew a small dog whip from his pocket and passed his fingers gloatingly along the lash. "I reckon you'll marry George Harkness all right! A touch of this was a medicine that used to bring your mother to heel." He broke into a mocking, brutal laugh and strode out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

For a few minutes Ray stood where he had left her, her hands twisted tightly together, her face drawn and pale. Her mother, that sweet-faced gentle shadow! More than anything with which he had threatened her, that mention of her mother unnerved her. That brute—that brute with his greed, his avarice, his sullen brooding silences! Something seemed to snap in her brain as for the first time she seemed to see clearly into this man's harsh, evil nature.

And then a fit of shuddering seized her for her own fate. Here in this remote spot, lonely and desolate among the bleak grey hills and dales there was no one to help her, no one to whom she could turn. Supposing after all they forced her into marrying George Harkness . . . supposing she wasn't able to hold out against them . . . !

She set her teeth. Never! She would run away first. She ought to have thought of that before. But where? She had very little money of her own. To whom could she go for help . . . ?

As she clasped her hands against her breast she felt the crackle of paper—Richard Meryon's letter! Richard Meryon would help her. Had he not begged her to go to him if ever she needed a friend . . . ? Well, never more than at this moment had she needed one!

In London she would do something to earn her own living. He would know what she could do. And in London they would never find her . . . ! If only she had enough money for the fare!

Anxiously she turned out her small shabby purse. No there was not enough—not nearly enough—only about five shillings and ninepence! The pretty patent leather shoes which she had bought from a travelling salesman only last week had sadly depleted her little store. Despair seized upon her.

And then a low knock sounded at her door. It was Jimmy, with his eyes bright and devoted as a dog's. In his hand he held a grimy envelope that he thrust into her hand. He put his finger to his lips with his usual exaggerated air of secrecy.

"Go away, Miss Ray," he said in a loud whisper, "'tisn't safe for you to be here no longer. Harkness 'll get you if you stay! This here's the fare for London. I don't need it truly. I've saved a lot."

A sudden gush of tears rushed to the girl's eyes. "Jimmy!" she cried, "you dear! But I couldn't —I couldn't really."

A hurt look came into the boy's eyes. "Please, Miss Ray," he pleaded. He lowered his voice, "that there Harkness has promised *him* a mint of money if he gets you. They say there's a lot of money to be made at singing in London, Miss Ray. You sing better'n a lark. It makes poor Jimmy feel all good inside."

He closed her fingers over the grimy packet. "There's a train at one o'clock, Miss. I'll get your bag down to the station so as no one knows. Trust Jimmy!" With a knowing wink and a cautionary finger again laid against his lip, the half-witted boy stole away, leaving Ray with misty eyes.

In the whole world this was the only living soul who really and truly cared for her. She could not refuse his gift so generously offered.

One day she would make it up to him a thousand times. Already something was singing in Ray's heart—the unquenchable faith of youth in the future.

London!

RAY looked about her scared and dazed with the noise of the traffic. It seemed to her that she could hardly draw breath in the smoke and dirt-laden atmosphere after being accustomed all her life to the fresh, cold air of the Derbyshire hills and dales. But still this was London, and London meant to her freedom from oppression. And still more definitely did it mean—Richard Meryon!

She tossed back her golden head so that more than one person in the dingy King's Cross Road turned their heads to look at her. She wasn't afraid, she told herself proudly. Richard Meryon would help her and advise her where to go and what to do.

It was getting towards evening now and the roads were swarming with men and women freed from work at last, after their long day in office and workshop. With a throbbing heart Ray dashed into the middle of the roadway and repeated to the policeman the one address she knew—Kerny Chambers, Chester Row. With a kindly glance at her fresh, eager young face, the man directed her to a 'bus, and half-an-hour later, with wildly-beating heart she found herself ringing the bell at Richard Meryon's address.

But disappointment and despair awaited her. Mr. Meryon was not at home, the housekeeper replied to her eager question. No, he had not said when he would be in. Perhaps if she cared to call again later. . . .

Blinded by a mist of unshed tears, Ray turned away. There was nothing for it but to walk about London for a time until he was likely to have returned. If he was coming in for dinner he would be in at eight o'clock, the woman had told her.

Eight o'clock came and with it the rain. Footsore and weary, the country-bred girl made her way back to Kerny Chambers, a luxurious set of bachelor flats that had been formed by joining two houses. "Is Mr. Meryon in yet?" she asked anxiously when the housekeeper opened the outer door.

"Not yet," the woman shook her head glancing curiously and a little suspiciously at the young girl. "I dare say he will be in soon now," she added, seeing the look of utter disappointment on the wistful, pretty face. "Does Mr. Meryon expect you?"

"He asked me to call," began Ray, when the woman cut her short.

"Oh, well, if Mr. Meryon asked you to call, I suppose it's all right. Do you care to come in and wait a few minutes to see if he comes?"

Ray agreed eagerly and was shown into an apartment which seemed to her the very essence of luxury and taste. Gratefully she sank down into an enormous easy chair. A telephone bell whirred below and the housekeeper hurried away, though her footsteps fell noiselessly on the thick pile of the carpet on the stairs.

If Mrs. Parker, usually so reliable and impeccably correct, had not forgotten all about the girl almost as soon as she had admitted her, this story would never have been written. On such trifles do the fates of most of us depend. But the telephone call which interrupted her conversation with Ray turned out to be an urgent call for assistance from a daughter whose husband had just been knocked down by a motor-'bus. In a single breath Mrs. Parker turned over her duties to her husband, and seizing her hat and coat, hurried out into Chester Row. Not until many hours later did she even remember about the girl whom she had admitted to Mr. Meryon's apartment.

And meantime Ray had time to look around her and marvel at what seemed to her unaccustomed eyes the luxury in which Richard Meryon lived. The sitting-room in which she found herself was large, with three long French windows overlooking the street. Opposite the windows were folding doors that no doubt opened into the bedroom. The walls were painted a light French grey with black painted woodwork and long curtains of amber brocade at the windows. The deep chairs and settee were of a dull blue. There was a large bookcase overflowing with books, prints, mostly sporting, on the walls, cigars and pipes on a small table, and various relics of Richard Meryon's days at Oxford. A beautiful room Ray thought, and yet eminently masculine and meant for service She found herself wondering what he must have thought of the stiff mahogany and horsehair of the Derbyshire inn.

Ray had slipped off into a deep slumber.

The light was fading, but she would not have known how to switch on the electric light even if she had dared to do so. She curled herself up in the great chair and fought against the drowsiness that attacked her. But all last night she had had no sleep, and she was wearied with her two hours' tramp about the London streets.

Insensibly Ray slipped off into a deep slumber.

Presently, from dreams of Richard Meryon, she awakened with a start to the sound of voices and a bright light which illumined the room. She rubbed her eyes. A clock facing her across the room pointed to half-past one. For a moment she sat, bewildered, trying to collect her scattered senses. Then suddenly she remembered. She had come here to see Richard Meryon. This was his room she was in—at half-past one in the morning, with her visit unexplained and apparently undiscovered ! That was his voice now speaking.

With a sudden cry she started to her feet. Richard Meryon was standing by the table divesting himself of a heavy motoring coat. With him was another man in evening dress, a swarthy-looking man, with a dissipated-looking face that Ray found curiously repulsive. This man held a pink slip of paper clutched tightly in his fingers.

"Well, there's your cheque. Now go. I've mortaged every darn thing I've got to get the money together. I don't care if I never see you again, Bignald." It was Richard Meryon who had spoken savagely and turned away from the swarthy faced man just as Ray's cry rang out.

Both men turned with an exclamation. Neither had seen the sleeping girl curled up in the great chair just beyond the circle of the lamplight in the big room. She stood looking at them both with frightened eyes.

"What do you want ? What are you doing here ?" began Meryon sternly, then he broke off. "Good Lord ! It's Ray—Miss Herrick !"

The other man whom he had addressed as Bignald, laughed noisily. "Dammit! She's a jolly pretty girl!" he exclaimed, leering impudently into Ray's face. "Lord ! you're a deep one, Meryon. No wonder you were in such a hurry to get rid of me with such a pretty little bit of fluff waiting here for you !"

"Hold your tongue, Bignald," said Richard angrily, "and make yourself scarce. You've got what you came for, so go !"

"I'm going all right," returned the other. "I'm

not one to spoil sport. Perhaps little Ray here will give me a kiss before I go. You wouldn't like to come with me instead of staying with Richard, I suppose, ducky ?" He thrust his face in front of hers, and with a cry she shrank back.

"Curse you, Bignald, get out!" cried Meryon furiously, "or by God I'll throw you out by the scruff of your neck! How dare you insult this lady!"

He put the girl on one side and advanced threateningly towards the other.

The man retreated. "All right, all right. Don't get your hair off, Meryon. Don't want to tell me, do you, that the lady's a bishop's daughter—in your room at this time of night ?"

He broke into a roar of coarse laughter and retreated towards the door. As he did so he bent to pick up his hat that had rolled to the floor, fell against a chair and overbalanced himself. Throwing out his arms wildly he caught his foot in the flex of a reading lamp and he fell heavily to the ground, striking his head with a sickening thud against the heavy brass fender. Then he lay still.

A cry broke from Ray's lips. Meryon was across the room in a couple of strides. He bent over the prostrate man. When he raised his head again, the colour died out of his face.

"My God!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "I believe he's dead!"

For a moment he stood still, then snatching up the telephone receiver that stood upon a small table, he gave a number. "Is that Dr. Bertram ? Meryon speaking from Kerny Chambers. For heaven's sake, man, come round at once! There's been an accident here. I believe the man is dead.

He replaced the receiver and turned towards the trembling girl. "I don't know what's brought you here," he said unsteadily, "but there's no time now for explanations. Whatever happens you must not be seen. Get into that other room and don't come out until I tell you. That doctor chap will be round here in a moment."

He took her by the arm and thrust her quickly into the bedroom that lay beyond the folding door.

It was only a moment or two though it seemed a sick eternity before Ray heard the sound of voices murmuring in the other room.

"He's dead," she heard the doctor's voice say curtly. "This is a matter for the police. You'd better ring them up at once. What's this he's got in his hand ?" Through the crack Ray saw him bend forward to examine the pink slip of paper that was still clutched in the dead man's fingers. There was a moment's silence.

"This is your cheque. So you owed this man money ?" said the doctor at length, slowly. "Isn't that unfortunate for you, Mr. Meryon ?"

"What do you mean ?" demanded Richard in a strained voice.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "On your own admission there was nobody but you and this man in the flat when the accident occurred. There is a wound on the head that might well have been caused by a weapon wielded by another man——"

Richard Meryon caught at the doctor's arm. "Do you mean that you accuse me—of murder ?" he shouted.

The doctor raised the telephone and called "Police!" He spoke for a minute then turned again to Richard Meryon.

"It is not my business to make charges," he said deliberately. "I think it is unfortunate for you, Mr. Meryon, that you were alone in your flat when this occurred and can call no witnesses."

The girl behind the door drew a long, shuddering breath while the world seemed to go black about her.

Murder . . . Richard Meryon . . . the man she loved. . . . And it was her fault!

With a shrill cry she flung open the folding doors and ran into the other room. "It's a lie!" she screamed. "He didn't kill him. I was there and I saw it all. . . ."

It is not murder. Meryon has had no hand in causing this man's death. And Ray can prove it—but at what a cost! To give her evidence she must confess that she was alone, at dead of night, in Meryon's rooms!

NEXT WEEK

Another Girl's Husband

"GINA—I have come back! Gina—my wife—I love you! Let us forget the past—put pride in our pockets—Gina darling. . . ."

The man's voice was unsteady with emotion, but in his listener's heart there was no response to his passion.

Horror had her in its grip, and every vestige of colour had drained from her cheeks. For Gina knew that she was not this man's wife. She was a fraud—a deceiver. . . . What was she to do?

Don't Miss This Fascinating Story. It Appears in NEXT WEEK'S

WEEK END NOVELS

A Powerful Complete Novel—The Love Story of a Girl who Found Herself Alone upon Foreign Shores at the Mercy of an Unscrupulous Scoundrel.

The MAN SHE WOULDN'T MARRY

By FLORENCE FIELD.

Her Splendid Chance.

"MY! but you do look pale and tired, Miss," said Doris Grey's landlady, Mrs. Flynn, one broiling hot July day when her lodger came home at half-past five, looking so white and done up that it seemed all she could do to drag one foot after the other. "Has that Spitfire been worriting you more than usual?"

The "Spitfire" was Beatrice Melville, an actress; not a "star" of the first magnitude, but still someone to be reckoned with.

Mrs. Flynn's sister was her "dresser" at the theatre, and it was the landlady who, when poor Doris had been out of work six weeks, told her that Miss Melville was looking for a Secretary-companion.

Miss Melville was not a lady born, but had risen from a very humble origin, and now she needed someone to coach her up in sundry little social matters, write her letters, do her shopping and, in fact, take all trouble off her hands.

Doris was twenty-two and had moved in good society till her father's death and failure made it necessary for her to earn her bread.

Mrs. Flynn warned Doris of Miss Melville's violent temper and how when "put out" she could rage and storm like any furious fishwife; but the hours were easy—eleven till five—and the work, though a little arduous, not unpleasant; besides, as Miss Melville was constantly going to afternoon parties, she and her secretary did not see too much of each other, and Doris had so far never seen her employer in what Mrs. Flynn called her "tantrums."

"No, Mrs. Flynn," and the girl tried hard to laugh off her landlady's evident curiosity. "Miss Melville is just as usual, but I feel somehow as though trouble were coming; she is awfully mysterious and she sent me to a big bookshop to-day to buy her books describing Mexico. Now, what in the world can she want to know about Mexico?"

"Perhaps she is going on tour there," said Mrs. Flynn. "The piece she's playing in is to be taken off next week and the theatre closed for three months. My sister thought Miss Melville would just take a holiday, but there—one never knows!"

Poor Doris was to know why the actress was curious about Mexico all too soon. The next morning Miss Melville calmly gave her a week's notice!

"But what have I done?" asked the poor girl. "Oh, Miss Melville, I have tried so hard to please you! And to leave now at the end of July when I have no chance of getting a situation because all the world makes holiday. Oh, it is terrible!"

Miss Melville condescended to explain.

"I'm going on a tour to Mexico for three months. Sydney Carter is taking out a crowd to pose for some new film plays which are to have the scenery and setting of that strange, romantic land.

"I'm to be the leading lady; of course, all my travelling exes will be paid, and my screw's to be twenty pounds a week!

"It will make a splendid holiday and I shall be back in time to rehearse for the new fairy play that's to be the Odeon winter sensation."

Doris looked crestfallen.

"It's just splendid for you, Miss Melville! It must be delightful to travel and see new countries and feel all the while it costs you nothing. Oh, I'd give the world just to have a chance like that!"

Beatrice had a sudden idea; it was not pity—

that was a quality unknown to her—but she saw a chance of attaching Doris to her by unbounded gratitude and also of gaining an unpaid attendant on the voyage which in her secret heart she dreaded.

"Tell you what," she said, looking straight at the blue-eyed girl whose lot was so much harder than her own, "if you're so keen to see the world, I might say a word to the manager—Syd Carter's rather a pal of mine—and see if he'd take you along, too.

"You see, the 'wardrobes' will want someone to look after them and do slight repairs, and you're not bad to look at; you might even be useful to pose for some of the smaller parts. How would you like to be one of the crowd?

"Of course, all your travelling exes 'll be paid, but your board would be your own affair. What's the smallest salary you'd take?"

Doris said three pounds a week; Miss Melville assured her that living was "dirt cheap" in Mexico, and then rang up Mr. Carter on the 'phone, and the matter was settled there and then, so that when she went home to her poor little lodgings, Miss Grey was perfectly radiant.

Of course she told the news to Mrs. Flynn, but her landlady did not see matters through rose-coloured spectacles.

"If you go out to Mexico with Miss Melville, it'll be the maddest day's work you ever did. Supposing she turns against you and gets you dismissed? What will you do, left stranded in the heart of a wild, savage country?"

"But, Mrs. Flynn, *why* should Miss Melville turn against me? Of course, I know she has a temper, but why should she vent it on me? She has never been really nasty to me since I went to her six months ago."

"Do you ever look in the glass, Miss?"

"Pretty often, I am afraid, but what has that to do with it?"

"A good deal! The truth is, Miss Grey, you're a very pretty girl; then you are ten or fifteen years younger than Miss Melville and, to my mind, a lot more taking.

"Well, this hasn't mattered while you only went to her flat for a few hours a day and saw none of her friends; but mark my words, if you go to Mexico with this cinema crowd and there's a man in the company who chances to prefer blue eyes to brown ones, there'll be trouble."

"Oh, Mrs. Flynn, I came home so happy, and now you've made me feel quite frightened!"

"Well, it's for your own good," retorted Mrs. Flynn, "and I expect you'll go to Mexico all the same; but *if* you do, there's one thing you must see to—get it put in your contract that if you leave the company (unless by your own wish) at any foreign place, Carter's got to pay your fare down to the coast and your passage to England."

Doris *meant* to follow this advice, but Miss Melville told her airily that "extra people" just engaged as "general utility hands" didn't have contracts! Carter was a liberal chap and a great pal of hers, so it was sure to be all right.

And convinced—perhaps because she wished to be so—that Mrs. Flynn's warning was needless, Doris went down to Liverpool in the best of spirits; there she was to join the rest of the company and sail that same evening in the *Mexican Queen* for New Orleans, from which port they would go on in such smaller steamer to Vera Cruz.

A Spoke in His Wheel.

THE night before they were to reach New Orleans, Doris Grey sat alone in a quiet corner of the deck with a sad, troubled look in her beautiful eyes which had not been there when she left England.

"It *can't* be true," she told herself, "and yet why should Miss Melville invent such a lie? She spoke quite kindly; she seemed sorry for me . . . so it must be true. Oh, Douglas! Douglas! I wish we had never met. I trusted you; I believed all you told me, and now I know that your words were an insult."

Alas! for poor little Doris; the voyage had not been the dream of delight she had expected. All too soon she found out how disagreeable Beatrice Melville *could* be. Because *she* got Doris her post in the company, the actress thought she had a right to turn the girl into her slave; when she was upset by the motion of the ship and had to remain in her cabin, she expected Doris to remain with her for hours together and amuse her; when she could crawl up on deck, Doris had to sit by her and wait on her hand and foot; if she had been a paid lady's maid, more demands could not have been made on her.

In the three or four days that Miss Melville could not face meals in the saloon, Doris—seated at the Captain's table—made many pleasant acquaintances, and one of them, Douglas Carey, fell in love with her.

Rich, young, good-looking and with a nameless charm of manner that went straight to the girlish heart, starving for love and tenderness, he and Doris seemed cut out for each other; everyone on board regarded it as a match and thought little Miss Grey a very happy woman, and so she might have been if Beatrice Melville had not interfered.

Miss Melville had an almost uncanny gift for picking up information; after one or two meetings, she knew "all about" the new acquaintance.

As it happened, she had seen a good deal of Mr. Carey a year or two back, when he was very intimate with a young fellow playing at the Odeon; she used the information picked up then to give poor Doris a totally false impression of her lover.

"You seem very friendly with young Carey," she said one night, when she had insisted on Doris staying with her till she felt sleepy. "I suppose you know he's got a wife?"

Shy, proud, sensitive, Doris Grey tried to hide the shock these words gave her.

"He does not seem like a married man," she replied quietly though her heart ached with a dull, gnawing pain. "Are you quite sure?"

"Positive! She was in the chorus at the Odeon. Carey was always hanging round the theatre in those days; her name was Dulcie Fane, and she was just the prettiest little thing you can imagine.

"She left the Odeon suddenly without a word to anyone, and Douglas Carey never came to the theatre again.

"I met him alone in a restaurant nearly a year later and asked him what he had done with his wife. (I knew he had married Dulcie; she wasn't the sort of girl to believe in love without a wedding ring.)

"He said her health had broken down and he had had to place her in the care of a doctor. I got the address and went to see her; I don't go in for being sentimental, but I *did* pity that girl. She was as pretty as ever, but her mind was gone.

"There'd been a child, and something went wrong, and the mother lost her reason. She has every care and attention, but the doctor fears her case is incurable. Douglas Carey grudges no money spent on her, but he *won't* go near her, and the poor kid's one cry is for her husband.

"So now you see, it's not wise for you to let Douglas Carey make pretty speeches to you. If you doubt my story, this will go far to prove it; I'm good-looking and popular, yet Douglas Carey shuns me as if I were the pestilence—why? because I know his secret."

Poor Doris was allowed to leave Miss Melville's cabin then and go to bed. While she cried herself to sleep, Beatrice was thinking triumphantly:

"I rather fancy, Douglas Carey, I'm quits with you now. Two years ago you slighted me openly, and a woman like me never forgives that sort of thing; but I've put a spoke in your wheel now. Unless I'm mistaken in Doris Grey, she'll never speak to you again!"

After that, Douglas found it almost impossible to get a word alone with the girl he had learnt to love. She was perfectly polite and courteous to him while others were present; when she was alone, the moment he came up to her, she moved away and joined some fellow-passengers.

And now the last night of the voyage had come; to-morrow the ship would reach New Orleans and some of those who had been so intimate for the last three weeks would drift apart, probably to meet no more.

Douglas Carey had been searching everywhere for Doris Grey, and now that he had discovered her, he made up his mind she should not elude him.

Drawing forward a deck chair, he placed it so as to cut off her escape; then he turned to her and spoke; his voice throbbed with passion and his dark eyes were fixed on her with such a burning gaze that it seemed almost to scorch her face.

"You *must* listen to me!" he told her. "To-morrow we part, and I may never see your face again. Tell me just this—how have I offended you?

"Until a week ago I could have sworn you liked and trusted me . . . then your manner changed and you have never willingly spoken to me again. The meanest criminal on God's earth has a right to know his offence . . . Miss Grey—Doris—answer me . . . what have I done?"

"You have done nothing."

"You would not have changed towards me so suddenly for nothing. Of course, I know that Beatrice Melville is your bosom friend and she hates me like poison. What lies has she told you against me?"

Doris did not answer. Douglas stretched out his hand and took both hers in a warm, human pressure; perhaps he hoped that the touch of his burning fingers might wake the statue into life.

"Even if you won't answer me, I must still tell you what is in my heart. I could not let you drift away from me to-morrow without telling you the truth.

"Dear little girl, I love you with all my heart: my whole soul is crying out for you—for your love—your companionship. I want to feel that you are mine, darling; that your lips are for my kisses; your beauty for my delight; your sympathy for me only.

"My little white bird, you are not safe with Beatrice Melville; she would sacrifice you in a moment to her jealous fancies. With me you will be my first thought and care. Oh, Doris, leave Carter's cinema crowd and come to me!"

He paused and looked at her with passionate pleading in his eyes, to judge the effect of his words.

Alas! he saw that he had not convinced her; her expression was sadder than ever, but it held no sign of yielding.

They were at cross purposes; Douglas in his eager wooing had made no mention of marriage. A white man through and through, it never entered his head that Doris *could* mistake his meaning and think he was asking her to come to him as anything but his wife.

And she, poor girl, with Beatrice Melville's story of Dulcie Fane ever present in her mind, imagined he was offering her love, wealth, luxury, and not the one thing it was out of his power to give while the poor mad girl lived—his name.

"I cannot, oh, I cannot!" The words seemed wrung from Doris in her agony. "Why do you torture me with pictures of what can never be?"

A strange new light came to him.

"Doris! I believe you love me after all."

"Yes . . . I love you . . . but love is not enough; besides, the love would soon die a dishonourable death if I came to you over the barrier of former vows and a broken pledge."

If only she had spoken more plainly; if she had said bluntly, "I will never be anything to you while your wife lives," an explanation must have followed; as it was, Douglas believed she alluded to some engagement of her own which must in honour part them.

"Poor little girl," he said huskily. "If you won't have pity on me, won't you have some for yourself? Doris, you have confessed you love me; then think of the dull, grey life you will lead without me. Oh, my darling, my little love, break down your scruples and come to me!"

She shook her head. In the distance they heard the first notes of "*God save the King*" and knew that the concert going on in the saloon was over and that any moment might bring the crowded audience up on deck. It was Douglas Carey's last chance, and he hurried on feverishly:

"I want you to do one thing for me, Doris . . . in spite of the bonds you speak of, you are my life's love, and so long as I have breath you will be the first and dearest thing to me on earth.

"You won't have me for your lover, but surely you won't refuse me as a friend?

"Little girl, I know more of life's darker side than you can do; I can't help feeling that trouble may come to you in the wild up-country district where Carter means to take his company, and I know perfectly well that Miss Melville is not to be depended on to take your part.

"Promise me just this, my darling: if a day comes that you need a man to fight your battles and take your part, send for me and I will come from the uttermost part of the earth to serve you."

And then quite suddenly he took her in his arms and kissed her; their lips clung together in one long, lingering kiss which seemed to Doris to draw the very heart out of her body.

Suddenly he took her in his arms and kissed her.

Douglas moved away, and five minutes later the people who had been listening to the concert poured on deck and one or two demanded of Doris why she had not come to hear it; some of the singing was first-rate!

Doris did not see Douglas Carey again; he was one of the first passengers to leave the ship, and the cinema crowd remained on board to breakfast.

Doris Learns Her Mistake.

THE first few days after landing were full of excitement, and, in spite of the gnawing pain at her heart, Doris Grey could not help being interested in the strange new scenes around her.

Beatrice Melville paid very little attention to her, being quite engrossed with her own concerns, and the only creature in the company who seemed to have time to notice Doris was Claude Arnold, the "young lover" of the crowd, a pleasant, kind-hearted fellow whom, just because she knew he had left a little wife whom he adored in England, the lonely girl felt she could trust to advise her in the many difficulties which cropped up.

The first of these was the hotel charges which were quite beyond Doris's means; Claude told her everyone in Mexico asked more than they meant to take and he "bargained" with the hotel-keeper so successfully that Doris was able to pay her way, though it was clear to her that it would be a constant struggle to make both ends meet.

When the parts for the first of the new plays were cast, Sydney Carter gave Doris a much better one than she had dreamed of and, as a consequence, Beatrice Melville was so furious that she not only raved at the poor girl till she was positively scared but gave the manager himself a piece of her mind.

That same evening Claude Arnold invited Doris to go for a little stroll with him.

"I wanted to give you just a hint," he said frankly. "Beatrice Melville has got her knife into you and she'll never rest till she gets you sacked. Now, Miss Grey, when once we leave the beaten track and go up country, you'll be in an awful hole if you're fired suddenly.

"Wouldn't it be better for you to leave now of your own accord, while we're still in Mexico City? The English Consul here would either advance your passage money or find some mother going home with a tribe of little children who'd pay it gladly for the sake of your help on the voyage."

"Oh, Mr. Arnold, I can't draw back now! I just long to see the grand mountain scenery, and I'm to have a part—a real part—in the play."

Arnold sighed; he was afraid to scare her and so he could not tell her the reasons for his advice.

"Douglas Carey was a great pal of mine," he

said suddenly, "and he made me promise before he left the *Mexican Queen* to do anything I could to help you.

"He was just wrapped up in you, Miss Grey. It's a thousand pities you couldn't fancy him."

"You forget," said Doris a little stiffly, "Mr. Carey has a wife, and though she happens to be out of her mind, he cannot marry while she lives."

Claude turned to her in open amazement.

"I've known Douglas Carey for over a dozen years; we were at Rugby together, and I'll swear this—he has never been married in his life."

"But——"

"But Beatrice Melville told you he had a mad wife! Just like her. She hated Carey for years and he loathes the sight of her.

"Douglas is my friend and I'd like to tell you the truth even though you may not believe me.

"Three years ago Douglas was a poor man—just a clerk on three hundred a year, and a pretty little sister to keep out of it.

"Beatrice Melville met the Careys—I don't know how—and fell in love with Douglas. He wasn't 'taking any' and she made up her mind to be revenged.

"He was devoted to his little sister, so Miss Melville decided to strike at him through Dulcie.

"She persuaded the little girl she had a dull, dreary life, and lured her on to the stage, where she took the name of 'Fane.'

"Dulcie Fane couldn't act a bit, but she was dazzlingly pretty, so she got taken on to sing in the chorus. . . . There was a Johnny there (I won't tell you his name) who pretended to be in love with her and persuaded her to leave the theatre, her brother and her home for his sake.

"Douglas pursued them and forced the cad to marry his sister; after that the couple went on tour and he heard very little of Dulcie.

"A year later he was wired for by the matron of a hospital; his sister had been admitted there the day before, her dead child in her arms. Her husband had deserted her; she and the baby had been starved, and when the little thing was taken, Dulcie's brain snapped and she lost her reason.

"She had been too proud to apply to her brother, but the hospital authorities found a letter with his address, so of course they sent for him.

"He had just come in for a large fortune and a pretty little place in Surrey, but all the same he rushed off to the hospital as soon as he got the wire.

"He spent money like water over the poor girl, and when two great mental specialists told him there was no hope of her recovering her reason, he placed her in one of the most luxurious mental hospitals as a paying patient.

"She has her own rooms; a nurse to do nothing but look after her. She isn't unhappy; her intellect is about that of a child of five; she nurses a doll and looks at picture-books, but her one cry is for her husband.

"She doesn't recognise her brother when he goes to see her; her one cry is for 'Philip'—the scoundrel who broke her heart.

"Douglas Carey blames Miss Melville for his sister's fate; he has cut her publicly, and . . . well, I suppose she told you the lies about his marriage in revenge.

"Miss Grey, believe me, Douglas Carey is one of the best.

"*Can't* you take my advice; leave the crowd here, send him a line that you said 'No' under a mistake and—be happy?"

But Doris couldn't do that; her pride shrank from what she thought was like asking Douglas to marry her; besides, her trifling success had excited her; the wild, romantic scenery had given her the Mexican fever; she wanted to go on and see all the wonders of this strange, tropical land.

One of the plays would have its scenes in the famous silver mines, and to reach these the company had to travel for the best part of a week through a forest.

The first drama filmed was a grand scene, and Sydney Carter told Doris frankly she would end by becoming a cinema star.

After this, the company stayed for a week in Guadalia before crossing a famous mountain pass in quest of a fresh setting for the next play.

It was one of the quaintest towns imaginable; it had a few modern comforts, but for the rest an almost savage barbarism.

No one boasted a private supply of water; it had to be conveyed from the public pumps in what looked like wheelbarrows.

As for the milk, it was delivered by a man on horseback, dressed in the national costume, with big cans of milk dangling from either side.

Doris loved to wander through the open-air market where every salesman sat under the shade of an umbrella; she liked to buy the luxurious tropical fruit and the honey.

On the last evening at Guadalia, Doris looked prettier than ever in a cool white frock with a bunch of crimson passion-flowers at her breast.

Sydney Carter hardly took his eyes off her through dinner, and when it was over begged her to come for a walk with him through the valley.

As they wandered on among the blaze of tropical flowers, Carter told Doris she had made quite a "hit" while posing in the last play, and that he felt quite sure that when they got back to England, with his help and influence she would be a cinema star.

"I'd just love to be rich!" said Doris dreamily.

It was not that she wanted money for its own sake, but she was thinking this: if only she were well off, if only she had a little, she might be able to write to Douglas and tell him why she had refused him. To do this while she was a penniless girl, friendless and alone in the world, seemed to her foolish pride impossible; but when she was a cinema star . . . ah, then!

"You were made for home life!" Carter told Doris. "To have a dear little cottage with you for its queen is the fairest fate I can think of for a man."

Doris felt vaguely troubled. Was Mr. Carter making love to her? Did he mean to ask her to be his wife?

She hoped not with all her heart; the manager of the cinema crowd had always spoken kindly to her; he had encouraged her efforts and given

her every chance to improve; but—as a man she did not like or trust him, and assuredly if he proposed to her she would say "No."

But the proposal had not come when they returned to the hotel. Carter paused a moment in the deep porch and looked hastily round; then, seeing there was no one to see them, he stooped suddenly, gathered Doris in his arms and pressed one burning kiss on her lips.

Forsaken.

DORIS GREY was thankful to remember that as they would be travelling in the diligence nearly the whole of the next day there was not the least fear of her being left alone with the two people she dreaded most—the manager of the company and his leading lady, Beatrice Melville.

As for Beatrice, after that one furious attack on Doris when she stormed at the girl like a virago, she had hardly spoken at all. Her tactics were to "cut" her sometime protégée but yet to talk *at* her to other people whenever she got the chance.

The company had to travel thirty miles in the Mexican diligence before they reached their next destination, Chapala Lake.

Never in her life had Doris seen or imagined anything like the diligence, and yet it reminded her a little of the coaches sometimes driven round a town to advertise a circus.

It had trappings of crimson and gold, was about the size of a pantechnicon, and though it was drawn by eight mules, its size made them look so small that Doris pitied them for having to draw it till Claude Arnold told her that Mexican mules were as strong as horses.

There were no steps, so to climb to the roof was a difficult task which Doris did not attempt. She sat inside with Claude Arnold and tried to enjoy the scenery, but as the diligence was destitute of springs and so heavy that it swung from side to side, very soon she felt bruised all over.

"Be thankful we're not outside," said Claude cheerfully. "I've been expecting the fellows there to be thrown off whenever the mules turned a corner."

They stayed two days at Chapala, and Doris was not quite such a success. She felt stiff and bruised all over; she was full of anxiety lest Sydney Carter should attempt any more love-making, and so it was not surprising that she could not pose so effectively as she had done before.

There was a malicious glitter in Miss Melville's brown eyes, and she and the manager seemed to have a great deal to say to each other.

"If only he would pay all his attention and make all his pretty speeches to *her*, I'd be delighted," thought Doris on the morning of the third day when they resumed their journey in the diligence, not to return to Guadalia but to go on to Contory, a much smaller town from which the party would travel by train to the South.

On the journey to Contory they made acquaintance with a rich Spaniard, Señor José Huani, an aristocrat of the King's Court, Miss Melville asserted, but who looked to Doris very like a Mexican native.

He was almost fifty, heavily built and with an air of authority. However, he was most amiable to the cinema party, specially to Doris, who felt her face burn when he stared at her with his bold black eyes.

"You have made a conquest," Claude Arnold whispered to her when during a long wait for the mules to be refreshed with water the whole company alighted and strolled about a little, glad enough to stretch their limbs after being cramped up in one position for so many hours.

"Please don't," returned Doris in a low voice. "He looks so horrible that I feel quite frightened of him."

"I can tell you who resents his admiration of you as much as you can do yourself—Mr. Carter."

"He has no right to," retorted Doris. "I am nothing to him but a member of his company, and I want nothing to do with him out of working hours."

Claude Arnold looked so serious at this speech that Doris asked him what was the matter; was there anything wrong in what she had said?

"Nothing wrong; the remark to my mind was very natural; but, Miss Grey, the Boss came up behind us in time to hear every word and—well, his face was like thunder. I'm afraid there'll be trouble brewing."

When they left the diligence at the Contory inn (it could hardly be called an hotel), Sydney Carter managed to interrupt Doris as she was following the other ladies upstairs.

"I want to speak to you, Miss Grey; come out here."

He led the way through an open door into the garden, and then turned down a shady walk bordered by orange trees; such a sheltered spot that he felt quite secure from observation either from his own party or others staying at the hotel.

"I heard what you said to Arnold just now," he said in a hectoring—almost brutal—tone. "You wanted 'nothing to do with me out of working hours.' Well, Miss Grey, you shall have nothing to do with me in future either in your work or your play time. Go to my treasurer and he'll pay you your salary up to date with a week extra instead of notice. From now you are no longer a member of my company.

"We shall go away from Contory by the first—indeed, the only—train to-morrow. You will remain and choose your own society in future since mine does not please you."

His words terrified Doris; she had not saved any of her salary; indeed, she had spent nearly all the nest-egg she had brought with her. What would become of her, left stranded in this remote spot?

"Have pity!" she implored Syd Carter. "At least pay my fare back to England."

"I shall do nothing of the kind! You have treated me with gross discourtesy. Apart from that, I am going to be married as soon as we get back to Mexico City, and my future wife objects to your remaining in the company.

"She says you 'make eyes' at all the men; on board ship it was Mr. Carey . . . she's a lady of

strong will—my bride-elect—and she insists on getting rid of you."

Of course, he was going to marry Beatrice Melville. Doris saw it all; she had been just a cat's-paw; the manager had paid her attention to arouse Beatrice's jealousy; now he and his "star" were definitely engaged and Doris was not needed any more.

She was not at dinner, and after it was over the treasurer buttonholed Claude Arnold.

"Look here!" he said bluntly. "You're rather pals with Miss Grey. I wish you'd give her this money—six guineas—it will be less painful to her if you hand it over than if she had to apply to me for it.

"If you want my opinion, Arnold, the poor girl has been shamefully treated; I don't know which of the precious pair I blame most—Syd Carter or his leading lady."

Claude Arnold was a white man all through, and his will was good to help the girl who seemed the victim of fate, but he was painfully short of ready money.

His salary was good (though only about half Beatrice Melville's), but he sent home every penny he could spare week by week to the wife left behind with her baby; actually in hard cash he had only a few shillings over and above his necessary expenses till "the ghost walked again" next treasury day.

He knew he must not wait till morning, for the train left soon after daybreak. By good luck the innkeeper's wife was English, so he was able to talk to her in his own language. He told her Miss Grey was staying on in Contory for a little while after they left, and asked her to let him see the young lady for a few minutes alone in her family salon.

Very soon Doris came to him, pale as death and with a blank misery in her beautiful blue eyes.

He handed her the money with the cashier's message, and then said rather huskily:

"All my sympathy is yours, Miss Grey, but you want something more useful than that. I've no money about me, worse luck! but as soon as I get to a big town I can pawn my watch; it's a good one and I shall get at least five pounds on it. I mean to send you every penny and perhaps it will help you to carry on here till help comes."

"It's the kindest thing I ever heard of," said Doris, "but, Mr. Arnold, *will* help come? You see, it would cost an awful lot to take me back to England, and I can't think of a single creature likely to find the money.

"I've been thinking," she whispered, the terror in her eyes deepening, "that perhaps the best thing for me to do would be to end it all in the river."

"Now listen to me," pleaded Claude. "It's only cowards who take their own lives, and I'm sure you are a brave girl.

"The moment I get to Mexico City I'll go straight to the British Consul and tell him everything. I'm pretty sure he'll wire enough cash to take you down to the coast, and then he'll manage your passage home somehow. You can count on five pounds from me in a fortnight—can you carry on till then?"

"Easily. But——"

"We can't have any 'buts'! Posts are not reliable here; besides, letters are not so powerful as words—that's why I don't propose to write to the Consul, but mean to wait till I can see him.

Doris saw the man she loved best on earth.

"I'm *positive*, Miss Grey, that I can get you safely out of this difficulty, only . . . it may take time. Now, will you promise me to keep up your courage and *wait?* I'll be as true to you as I'd wish any Johnny to be to my own wife if she found herself in such a strait as yours."

"I trust you perfectly," said Doris, "and I'm positive you will send me help."

"There's another thing I ought to tell you," said Claude: "don't trust any of the servants here. The landlord's wife is English, and I *think* she'd be true to you, but the coloured servants are probably thieves and liars.

YOUR FORTUNE

By ONE WHO

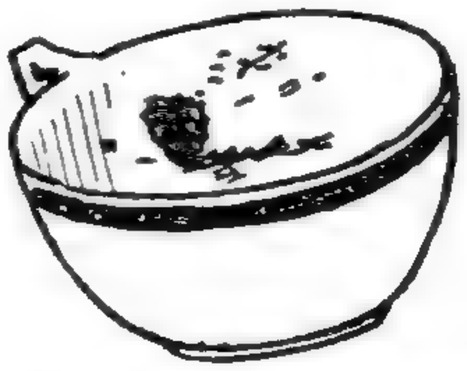
A MAN RUNNING. Unexpected News.

What the Tea-Leaves Tell.

BY what tiny, trivial happenings are we enabled to read the immensities of Fate!

A bird taps with its beak upon the window-pane—a guttering candle forms around itself a sheath of tallow—a minute insect makes, within the wall, a tiny, ticking sound. And we, who see or hear, tremble, for we know that in these seemingly insignificant trifles lies a warning of the greatest of all terrors—Death!

So it is in other matters. He who would pierce beyond the veil and penetrate the mysteries of the future must realise that no detail is too trivial from which to derive knowledge. The fall of a card; a line in the palm of a hand; the shape and position of a tea-leaf in a cup . . . from all these things, to one who has power to read, can the future be learnt.



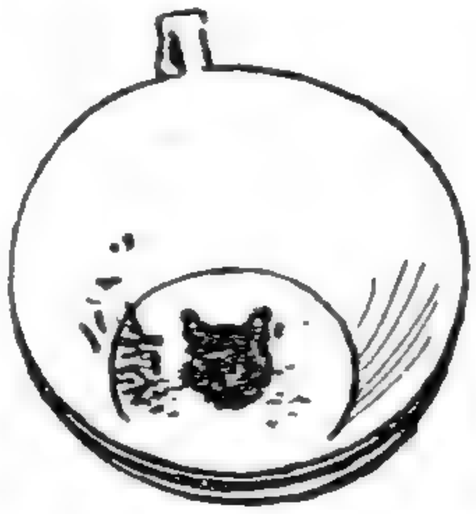
A PIPE, For a man, a sign of domestic peace. But if smoking, domestic worry.

The reading of fortunes from tea-leaves is by no means a new art. From the dim and almost forgotten past of ancient China come legends of a mystic brew, concocted by soothsayers from the dried leaves of a plant—not for the purpose of drinking, but to foretell the future.

The art is not difficult to acquire. Practice, of course, is necessary, but with perseverance and by the aid of the table of meanings given on this page, the student will soon find himself able to give a connected reading from the seemingly unconnected facts to be gleaned within the cup.

How to Begin.

TEA from which fortunes are to be read should be made from a brand which consists of long leaves, not one which is mainly dust, or the symbols and patterns will be indefinite and hard to decipher.



A CAT. If standing—change; If sitting—settlement.

THE MAN SHE WOULDN'T MARRY—

(Continued from previous page.)

"Is there a lock to your door?" he asked suddenly.

"No, but there's a large wooden bar that goes straight across."

"Good! Then mind you bolt your door every night, and look here: that old Spaniard, José Huani, who came with us in the diligence, is staying on for a few days. Don't have more to do with him than you can help."

He took her hand in a warm, close grip, muttered "God bless you," and went off, leaving the girl to tramp up the rough wooden stairs to her own room, feeling she had lost her last friend.

"Now I wonder if I ought to have told her," mused the young actor. "I'd a great mind to let her into the secret, because I knew it would cheer her up. But there's no telling how a poor girl

(Continued at foot of Col. 2, next page.)

IN YOUR TEA-CUP

CAN READ THEM.

The enquirer should drink as nearly as possible all the liquid from the cup, then turn it round three times, with the left hand, invert it over the saucer, and pass it, still inverted, to the person who is to read the fortune.

The reader sets the cup upright with the right hand, and reads from left to right.

The leaves at the bottom of the cup denote the past; those on the sides the present and immediate future. It is impossible to read the remote past or distant future from tea-leaves.

A List of Meanings.

A Star.—Good luck.

A Cross.—Trouble—probably quarrels.

A Man Running.—Unexpected news.

A Dog.—A faithful friend.

Birds.—Small birds, such as swallows, doves, robins, etc., mean friends and happiness. But large birds, such as turkeys, owls, etc., mean either enemies or business acquaintances.

A Pointing Hand.—Success in business.

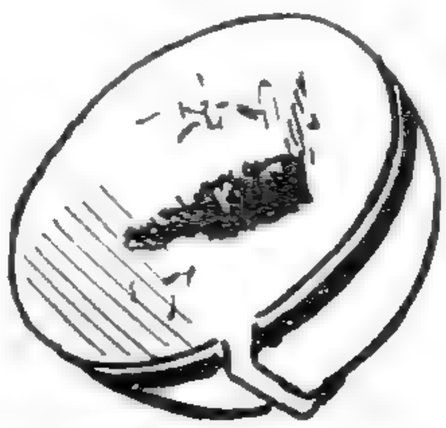
Scissors.—If pointing upwards, a quarrel between lovers. If pointing downwards, a settled dispute.

A Square.—A letter

A Triangle.—An invitation

A BOTTLE.

News. If the bottle's neck is long, the news will come from afar; if short, from near by.



A BUTTERFLY.

A friendship is on its way.

A Boat or Ship.—New work.

A Butterfly.—A friendship is on its way.

A Hunchback.—Great wealth

A Musical Instrument.—Pleasure to come.

A Bell.—A marriage.

A Carriage or Conveyance.—Travelling.

A Watch.—An admirer.

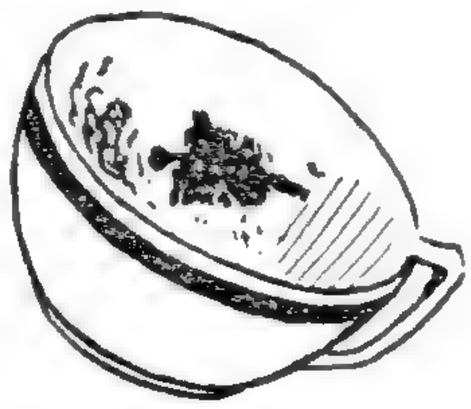
A Pipe.—For a man, a sign of domestic peace. But if smoking, domestic worry.

A Bottle.—News. If the bottle's neck is long, the news will come from afar; if short, from near by

A Crutch.—Failure.

A Chimney.—Hard work.

A Cat.—If standing, change; if sitting, settlement.



A BELL.

A Marriage.

THE MAN SHE WOULDN'T MARRY—

(Continued from previous page.)

like that will take things. Doris Grey is about as proud as they make 'em, and if she thought I meant to send Douglas Carey to her help, she might have hidden herself somewhere before he could get here."

Douglas Carey loved Doris with such a boundless, generous love that even her being bound (so he understood her refusal) to another could not change his longing to help her.

A great traveller, almost a "globe-trotter," he knew far more of the dangers awaiting a girl in the wilder parts of Mexico than did Claude Arnold, while his opinion of Beatrice Melville was so bad he could picture her deserting Doris at the first breath of trouble.

So, before he left the steamer, he spoke frankly to the one man of the cinema party he liked and trusted—Claude Arnold.

"Look here! I'm pretty sure there's trouble ahead for Miss Grey, and I don't mean to start for England as long as she's wandering among the Mexican mountains.

"I shall stay at the Royal Hotal, Vera Cruz, until I know Carter's company has left for England, and I trust to you, Arnold, to wire to me there if anything happens to make Doris Grey need a friend."

"Right you are!" was the other's answer.

Arnold meant to keep his word; he would pawn his watch the first chance he got and post the money he got on it to Doris. From the same post office he meant to wire to Douglas Carey.

His message would be worded something in this fashion:

"*D. G. stranded at the inn at Contory; urgent need of help at once.*"

He was quite positive in his own mind that Douglas Carey would start for Contory at once and never leave Doris till he had seen her on board an English steamer, homeward bound; but what he was uncertain about was the length of time needed to reach Contory from Vera Cruz.

Waiting.

CLAUDE ARNOLD and the rest of the cinema company were off soon after dawn and long before Doris opened her eyes again to the troubles of another day.

She was so utterly worn out that she slept not only through all the noise of their departure, but right on till the morning was far advanced, and when she at last opened her eyes it was to find Señora Gallardo standing by her bed and watching her with a bewildered face.

"And I who thought you would be weeping fit to break your heart," she said in the English which had become a little halting after a dozen years in Mexico. "Really it would seem you have no regrets for your friends."

"Some of the party were *not* my friends," said Doris, "and, Señora, I was so tired I slept just like a log."

The señora was kindness itself; unasked, she told Doris she would be welcome to sit in her own salon (it was really the only sitting-room apart from the bar and smoke-room) when indoors; she had better take her meals in the big dining-hall as she had done before and the charge would be just as arranged—twenty-five Mexican dollars, or about fifty shillings in English money.

Doris felt relieved, for at this price she had more than a fortnight's board in hand, and before it was gone Claude Arnold would surely send her the five pounds he had promised.

She kept her money in a strong leather purse which fastened with a snap, and this purse she had placed under her pillow the night before. When she took it from this hiding-place, meaning to transfer it to an inner pocket fastened underneath her blouse, it seemed to feel so strangely light that she opened it in fear. Alas! of her little hoard most of the silver and all of the paper money had disappeared, leaving her with a useless sum.

At that moment something like despair entered the girl's heart; Claude had warned her that it would be over a week—probably much longer—before his remittance could reach her; two week's board would be due before she could pay the señora. Would the Gallardos turn her out when they found she could not pay them, and, if so, God in Heaven, what would become of her?

But it was of no use to lie there brooding over her troubles, so Doris dressed herself and went into the garden. She found a seat on one of the benches in the orange grove, and sitting down, tried to decide a pressing question. Should she tell the señora that she had been robbed of nearly all her money? Perhaps to do so would make the landlady angry as casting a slur on the honesty of her staff, and yet thieves in Mexico were as common as flies.

Failing this, had Doris better confess frankly that she had no money until a remittance came from Mr. Arnold (handsome Claude had been a great favourite with the señora) and that besides this help, she expected the British Consul at Mexico City to arrange for her journey back to England?

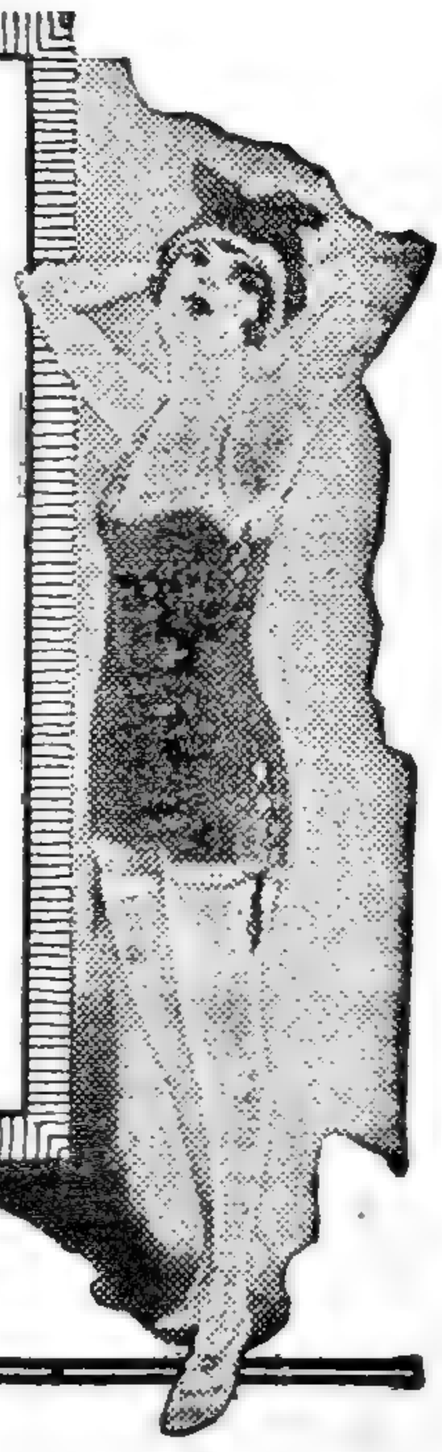
Doris liked the señora, but she distrusted the innkeeper himself and did not know how far his wife was under his influence.

She was so lonely, so utterly miserable that when two of the señora's little children playing near began to make advances to her, she responded readily and ended by taking the dark-eyed toddlers

(*Continued on next page.*)

DISFIGURING HAIR.

One tube of Veet Cream and never again will you have need of razors or old-fashioned depilatories. They merely remove hair *above* the skin surface, whereas Veet melts the hair away *beneath* it. It is as easy to use as a face cream. Just spread it on just as it comes from the tube, wait a few minutes, rinse it off and the hair is gone as if by magic. Veet has been endorsed by the medical profession. Satisfactory results guaranteed in every case, or money is returned. Veet is on sale everywhere for 3/6. Also sent post paid in plain wrapper for 4/-. (Trial size by post for 6d. in stamps.) Dae Health Laboratories (Dept. 189Z), 68, Bolsover Street, London, W.1.



VEET

for a walk in the valley, even carrying the smaller of the pair home because she complained of being tired.

As she reached the inn, José Huani, who was lounging by the gate, looked at her curiously; the beautiful, fair-haired English girl with the black-eyed baby in her arms was a picture which appealed to him.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, you are like me then—fond of the little ones?"

He spoke in French, which Doris understood perfectly; she answered him in the same language.

"We have been for a walk together, Monsieur, and Maria was so tired that I had to carry her."

The children's mother came from the house then and took the baby from Doris with voluble gratitude; the English girl went upstairs to her room; José Huani and the señora remained talking.

"Did you succeed?" he asked in a mysterious whisper.

"Perfectly; it was the easiest thing in the world."

"Then Mademoiselle has not discovered her loss, for she does not look as though she had shed a single tear."

"My countrywomen are brave," returned the señora, "but Miss Grey knows perfectly what has happened. Presently she will either tell me that she has been robbed, or apologise for keeping me waiting for my money."

"And you——?"

The señora smiled.

"I shall tell the young lady there is no need to worry. I can wait a week or two perfectly."

"And then——?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Presently I shall tell her that my husband is a hard, stern man, and he has found out that she has not paid her dues. I have pleaded for her, and for my sake he will let her stay one week longer, but before it is up she must pay or go."

The Spaniard rubbed his fat hands in triumph; the web was closing round his victim.

The señora seemed for one moment to be troubled by a scruple; she looked straight into his face and asked:

"You mean to act honourably by the girl, Señor? You will remember that she is English and as innocent as a child."

"I will remember. The post of housekeeper at my *hacienda* and instructress of my children is surely an honourable post; the salary of eight hundred dollars is handsome for the work required."

Two days passed; the monotony and loneliness began to prey on Doris Grey's health and spirits; she woke every morning with a pang of terror since it brought her nearer and nearer to the time when she must confess to the señora that she could not pay her bill.

At last—the day before it would be presented to her—she gathered up her courage and told Señora Gallardo of her plight; she had been so suddenly dismissed that she had not saved anything; her friend, Mr. Arnold, would send her some money in a few days and he would try to arrange with the British Consul about her passage to England.

Would the señora allow her to stay on till she heard from him and wait for payment till the remittance came?

"Of course I will," said the woman who had stolen the poor girl's little hoard and so was really paid in full for another fortnight. "Don't give the matter another thought, Miss Grey; the money can wait perfectly."

A few more days passed, and every morning Doris visited the post office; she fancied, poor girl, she would get Claude's letter a little quicker if she called for it, but the same answer always met her: "There was nothing for the English lady."

Had Claude failed to dispose of his watch? Had he sent the money and it had been lost in the post? These fears haunted her, but of one explanation she never thought; it never entered her head to think that the young actor had broken his promise.

She only did him justice. Claude *had* pawned his watch at the first available chance and had sent the money in Mexican notes to her at the Contory Inn. The registered letter arrived *before* Doris had begun to expect it and was duly "signed for" by the Señora Gallardo.

The woman Doris thought her best friend had betrayed her—cruelly, remorselessly, for love of gain.

Hope Deferred.

"I AM sorry, Miss Grey, very sorry, but my husband he insists. A hard man, he says those that do not pay must go.

"For my sake, because I am English and you from my country, he will wait just one week longer. This is Thursday, if your reckoning is not paid by Wednesday night, Luis Gallardo will . . . put you out and . . . I hate to say it, he will keep your clothes."

It was worse—far worse—than Doris had dreamed of; half her wardrobe had been left in store at Mexico City because the film company having to travel by diligence or ride on mules (when all the baggage was carried by pack mules), Sydney Carter, to save money, had decided that his company should take only what was absolutely necessary with them.

Doris had only about half her wardrobe at Contory, but if it was impounded by the relentless Luis, what was she to do?

Since she was robbed of the bulk of her money, she had kept her few remaining coins stitched inside her dress; they might perhaps buy her two nights' food and shelter if she tramped on to a good-sized village two miles off, but who would take her in without any luggage? And besides, if she left Contory she lost all hope of ever receiving Claude's promised remittance or the letter from the British Consul.

The señora looked at her with careless pity; self-interest was all-powerful with her and she could not resist the bribe José Huani had offered her to play this cruel, unwomanly part; yet, strange to say, she *liked* Doris and did not wish harm to befall her.

The señora tried to persuade herself that Huani's intentions were quite honourable and that the post

of governess-housekeeper in his luxurious home with a salary of eighty pounds a year was quite suited to her.

"But, Señora," asked Doris, "what am I to do? For days I have been expecting money from Mr. Arnold, and now it is time for me to hear from the British Consul; help from one of these two may come any day."

"And I hope it *will* come by next Wednesday," said the woman kindly. "There are six posts that may bring it; but, Miss Grey, in getting this week's grace for you I have done my utmost; I know that, however much I plead, my husband will not wait beyond Wednesday night."

So Doris made another attempt:

"I am a skilful needlewoman; I can make and mend almost any garment. Surely with all your children you must want someone to look after their clothes . . . will you let me work for you to pay for my board if the money does not come by Wednesday?"

"Luis would never agree," protested the señora; then, as though the thought had only just struck her, "but, Miss Grey, if you are really skilful with your needle, I know of a post you could have to-morrow—governess to two little girls with a salary of eighty English pounds a year and a home in one of the finest *haciendas* in this country.

"As the children are motherless, you would be the head authority in the house, and since the *hacienda* is but thirty miles from Contory, your letters could be sent after you the very day they came."

"How did you hear of this situation?" asked Doris a little anxiously. "And if the little girls have no mother, to whom should I apply for particulars?"

"To their father, the Señor José Huani, now staying with us. He intended going down to Mexico City to find an instructress for his children, but he has told me himself he would be perfectly satisfied if you would undertake the charge.

"From the day he saw you with my Maria in your arms, he has wished this; he says he knows you are a lover of children and that in your care his little ones would be safe."

Every instinct of Doris Grey's nature was against the suggestion. José Huani might be a fond father (she believed Mexicans were generally good to children), but as a man she feared and distrusted him. She was frightened even to think of herself in a lonely *hacienda* with no woman of her own country near her and only coloured servants to whom their master's word was law!

Yet what was she to do?

If no help came before next Wednesday and the innkeeper turned her out with nothing in the world but the clothes she was wearing, what would become of her?

She yielded so far as to consent to see José Huani and listen to his requirements. He gave her very little more information than the señora had done; the children were twins and seven years old; their mother had died at their birth, and ever since they had been under the sole care of their nurse, a coloured woman long in the service of the family.

The señor said frankly he was a man of great

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2/- MONTHLY.—Costumes, Suits, Coat Frocks, Children's Clothing, Household Linen, Footwear, Jewellery. Catalogue free. Easy terms.—CASTLE SUPPLY CO. (Dept. 4), Norwich.

5/- ONLY. Looks worth 25/-. Jumpers made from the celebrated "Triomphe" Shetland Floss LOOK expensive. They cost 5/- only. ½lb. makes complete Jumper. Exceptionally choice colourings. Send for Free Samples.—GRANT STREET YARN CO., 32, Fairweather Green, Bradford.

wealth and, as his probable heiresses, he wished the twins to be brought up in accordance with their position.

He preferred an English governess, because having, presumably, no relations in Mexico, she would not always be wanting holidays.

He tried to paint the *hacienda* in glowing colours; he assured Doris again and again that she would be entirely her own mistress and her comfort would be studied in every way. Then, with a little hesitation, he alluded to her debt to the Gallardos, saying if she accepted his situation, he would gladly pay her a quarter's salary in advance so that she might leave Contory without any annoyance.

And then he waited for her answer.

No English girl ever found herself in a sorer strait than this. . . . Doris hated the thought of living under José Huani's roof with every fibre of her heart; she hated the man's coarse, sensual face; she distrusted his florid compliments; but . . . if she refused his offer, what would become of her?

At last she spoke formally, prudently, just as a woman of fifty might have done instead of a girl of twenty.

"Señor Huani, you have done me a great honour in being willing to trust your children to my care, but I will tell you the truth: I do not want to stay in Mexico.

"The wish of my heart is to go back to England, and I am hoping that the British Consul may arrange for me to do so.

"Will you wait until next Wednesday for my answer? . . . If no help comes to me by then, I will accept your offer."

"In fact, you want to keep my offer in case your Consul fails you. Well, Mademoiselle, I am willing; only I cannot wait *after* Wednesday; I must return to the *hacienda* that night, and unless you accompany me, my proposal is off."

Leave Contory with him at night. Travel alone with him through the lonely mountain passes! Why, the very thought filled the English girl with terror, but she hid her fear bravely; game to the last, she would hope on till Wednesday. If the post brought no relief, then she must take her choice of the only two refuges open to her—this *hacienda* of José Huani's or . . . the river.

A Clear Sky at Last.

THE great excitement of the day at Contory was the arrival of the diligence, that very same vehicle which had deposited Doris Grey and the rest of the cinema crowd at the inn only three weeks ago.

Doris took a *siesta* on Wednesday afternoon, and then, putting on a fresh white blouse and re-coiling her pretty hair, she went to her bedroom because it faced the front of the inn and she wanted to see whether the diligence had brought the señora any visitors.

A wild hope had come to her; if (and such a thing did happen, though rarely) the diligence brought an Englishman to Contory, Doris had made up her mind to tell him her story and implore his help; not the money to take her back to England—that was too much to ask—but a loan sufficient to pay her bill and take her to Mexico City.

There was only one traveller alighting (no doubt the diligence had deposited the rest of its passengers elsewhere), but the sight of him brought the crimson to Doris Grey's wan cheeks, for here was the man she loved best on earth!

What had brought Douglas Carey to Contory? Was it possible he had fallen in with Claude Arnold and, hearing of her terrible straits, had come to her help?

The last time Douglas spoke to her he had told her he would come from the ends of the earth to help her if she needed him.

Was it pure chance that had brought him to Contory, or had some sudden brain wave told him of her trouble?

A short interval—five minutes perhaps but not longer—and the señora herself appeared, bubbling over with excitement.

Miss Grey must come down at once. A gentleman was asking for her.

"Your troubles will be over now," she went on eagerly, "and when you tell this fine friend how badly you were treated by Mr. Carter, I hope you'll not forget to mention that two poor Mexicans kept you in their house and gave you of their best."

In truth, the señora was well satisfied with the course of events; she had already received José Huani's bribe of fifty pounds sterling for her assistance in a certain little scheme of his, and now no doubt the English stranger would pay Miss Grey's account with something handsome over in return for the "kindness" shown her.

The two who had loved, and parted on the *Mexican Queen* met again in the señora's little salon, and Douglas spoke no word of ordinary greeting; he simply opened his arms and gathered Doris to his heart.

"My darling! I know *now* why you refused me! Claude Arnold wrote and told me. Oh, Doris, I'd like to have the punishing of that fiend, Beatrice Melville, whose cruel lies parted us! . . . Dearest, you won't refuse me a second time; you'll give me the right to fight your battles?"

"I loved you always," she whispered, "even when I sent you away. . . . Oh, Douglas, there hasn't been a day since we parted that I haven't longed for you!"

"I had a letter from that good fellow, Claude Arnold," Douglas told her, "telling me how you had been deceived and I meant to meet you at Vera Cruz, but then later he wired to me saying you were here alone and in trouble. Doris, I've travelled night and day ever since I got the message, and now, my darling, tell me just what has happened."

She told him everything except two little facts; one, that the Gallardos had intended to turn her out that very night and detain her few possessions; the other, that she believed the señora, English though she was, had plotted to force her to accept the situation offered by José Huani.

"Darling! One thing is certain," cried Douglas.

(Continued at foot of next page.)

WHAT'S THE JOKE?

A LITTLE MIXED.

MINISTER (*to proud father of twins*) : What are these children to be named ?

FATHER (*who has been celebrating his paternity rather unwisely*) : Steak and Kidney.

MINISTER : I beg your pardon.

FATHER (*emphatically*): Steak and Kidney.

MINISTER : I think, my good man, you had better bring these children when you are sober.

MOTHER (*who had been listening complacently*) : What he means, sir, is Kate and Sidney, but he can't just say it yet.—L.S. (Spennymoor).

CERTAIN TEST.

Two fishermen were angling in a river, when one suddenly dropped his rod.

"Heavens !" he ejaculated. "Did you see that fellow fall off that cliff over there into the sea ?"

"Don't get excited, Bill," soothed the other. "Perhaps it was a movie actor makin' pictures."

"But, my stars ! How can we tell ?"

"Well," counselled the judicious one, "if he drowns, he ain't."—Miss L.B. (Norwich.)

JOKE COUPON No. 136.
This Coupon must accompany every joke sent in
W.E.N., August 2, 1924.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

MISTRESS (*to charwoman*) Did you ever listen-in, Mrs. Murphy ?

MRS. MURPHY : No, that I never did, Mum. I've worked for a good many ladies in my time, but not one of 'em ever caught me with my ear to the keyhole ! "—Mrs. M.R.C. (Manchester).

JOHNNY KNEW.

The teacher was trying to impress upon the children the importance of not forming bad habits ; and she asked :

"What is it that all of us find so easy to get into and so hard to get out of ?"

There was silence for a moment, and then little Johnny answered brightly :

"Bed !"—Miss V.J. (Burton-on-Trent).

WITHOUT THE OPTION.

"Oh," exclaimed a young singer, "how proud I am ! After my great reception last night, the audience shouted : 'Fine ! Fine !'"

"Good thing you didn't sing again," said his friend.

"Why ?" asked the singer.

"They would have yelled 'Imprisonment !'"—D.S. (Ayleston).

SPLENDID PRIZES FOR JOKES

This is one of the splendid prizes awarded for the jokes which appear on this page.

Write your jokes on a post-card and address them to Joke Editor, "Week End Novels," 18, Charterhouse-street, London, E.C.1.

JOKE RESULT No. 206.

A beautiful Manicure Set has been awarded to :—

Lydia Smith, 4, Park-par, Spennymoor.

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Mrs. M. R. Cochrane, 117, Upper Brook-st., C.-on-M., Manchester.

Miss V. Jones, 45, Stapenhill-road, Burton-on-Trent.

Dorothy Smith, 84, Old Church-st., Aylestone, Leicester.

THE MAN SHE WOULDN'T MARRY—

(*Continued from previous page.*)

"We leave here by train to-morrow and travel as fast as possible to Mexico City. Doris, will you marry me at the British Consulate and let me take you down to Vera Cruz as my wife ?"

Of course, the Gallardos were delighted to have the Englishman as their guest, if only for a night ; since José Huani had started alone for his *hacienda* as soon as he realised that his prey had escaped him, the señora was able to give Douglas Carey the best room in her house.

Douglas paid his sweetheart's bill with a handsome addition in return for the kindness shown her, and she never enlightened him as to the nature of that kindness, but when once they were safely in the train, she gave one sigh of intense relief and whispered :

"Oh, Douglas, I hope and pray I may never see Contory again !"

They had a great deal to hear and tell. Doris told her lover of Claude Arnold's goodness to her and how he had even pawned his watch for her sake.

"I never received the money, but I am quite sure he sent it," she concluded.

"We'll pay him back threefold, darling, and I'll buy him the finest watch I can find in Mexico City. Doris, when Claude Arnold comes back to England, I'll do my best to make things easier for him."

They were married at the British Consulate and then went down to Vera Cruz where they found a steamer on the point of sailing

By the time she got to England, Doris had heard from her husband's own lips the story of his sister's sorrows, and in return she told him why she refused him.

Another Fine Novel Next Week.

The Most Fascinating Serial Romance ever written—the story of a Girl to whom Love meant everything—and of her Gradual Realisation that to the man she had Married, there were other things besides Love.

By CHRISTINE ASHLEY.

Chapter I.

ON a Saturday afternoon two girls, Constance King and Sheila Grey, sat over a tea-table waiting for Lavender Morris, the third of their little trio of friends.

But Lavender did not come. Instead, a messenger boy brought a letter, addressed to them both.

"*Darlings, forgive me,*" Lavender had written, "*I am engaged to Jock Haslam, and we are buying the ring this afternoon, so I can't come. Oh, darlings, I am happy! You always said I was lucky, Shee, and now I know it's true. I am the luckiest girl in the world!—LAV.*"

Sheila and Con looked at each other.

"Con," said Sheila slowly, "do you think he's after her money? You see—he knows that she's not just an ordinary shop-girl, like I am—that she's only doing it for experience, and that she's really the granddaughter of old Crick, and heiress to the shop itself. She's always been lucky, right enough; but this time I'm not sure. . . ."

Con said nothing at all, but her face was very grave.

* * * * *

Lavender's engaged days were short and blissfully happy. Then came the wedding, a day of flawless radiance, and a perfect honeymoon in Italy.

Lavender felt that life held, for her, not one crumpled rose leaf. And then, at a big dance at Crick's, a tragedy occurred. Tom Carter, Sheila's fiancè, fell down a lift shaft and was terribly injured—supposed killed.

There were only two witnesses of the accident—Jock Haslam and Sheila Grey. They two alone knew that there had been a quarrel between Jock and Tom—and a scuffle . .

And then, to Jock's horror, Sheila demanded money from him as the price of her silence.

Very unwisely, Jock kept the whole affair secret from Lavender, and endless misunderstandings followed. But at last Jock sought his wife in her grandfather's house, and explained everything fully.

"Did you see me with Sheila, that night at the dance?" He asked her.

Night of Weeping.

"I WENT away . . . directly I saw who it was with Sheila—Con and I went away," Lavender whispered.

Jock moved nearer to her. He seized a chair, one of the ordinary bedroom suite variety, by its back, and set it down in front of her. All the while his deep-set, tired eyes were fixed upon her face. He never moved them at all, watching her closely even as he sat down astride the chair, with his hands folded on its back, opposite to her.

"Tell me exactly what you did see!" he commanded. "Begin at the beginning—that is if you want to help me out of this confounded muddle. If you don't . . . well, I shall quite understand if you simply tell me to go to the devil! I haven't brought anything but trouble into your life so far, and it looks as though I were going to bring you a lot more. If the police take this up—"

"Oh, but they won't! Oh, Jock . . . this is all nonsense . . . a bad dream or something! Murder You! Why, it's ridiculous—after all this time. . ."

"That's what I thought. I never gave it a serious thought when first Sheila talked . . . as you heard her talk. It never occurred to me that she really thought me . . . Carter's murderer!"

"I don't believe she does!"

"Oh, yes, she does! That same night—the night of the ball—when I took her home she said so. But I thought it was just because she was so upset.

I didn't take her in the least seriously. I didn't understand her then!"

"And do you now?" Lavender asked curiously.

"Well . . . as much as it's possible for a fellow to understand that sort. Since you left me we've fallen out. Anyhow, now it's her word against mine—since you say you and Con saw nothing before Carter . . . died?"

"Nothing that—that is any good. We saw Sheila running away from someone and laughing. Then we saw her caught and . . . and kissed. And that the man was—you. I made Con come away. It was quite a long time after—long enough for us to get back to the place where we'd been sitting—that we heard a crash and Sheila screaming. . . ."

"Nobody was there at all until it was too late for it to be any good," Jock commented in a dry voice. "Sheila told nobody anything, either then or at the inquest. She says now it was to shield me. But I never asked her to shield me, or thought I needed it!"

"What did really happen?" Lavender asked, moistening her dry lips with the tip of her tongue.

"Carter came suddenly upon us and tried to drag Sheila away. He didn't say a word. He was perfectly self controlled. So was I. I felt it was a rotten situation, and I was thinking what I'd better say . . . whether we had better laugh it off as a joke—which it really was—or what. Sheila struggled against him. I don't know exactly what she said, but she caught hold of my arm. By that time we were close to the palms and things that were across the opening of the lift shaft. I didn't know anything about it being there—how should I? I suppose Carter thought I was holding on to Sheila and trying to get her away from him. Anyhow, he suddenly lashed out at me, hitting me a tremendous crack on the arm Sheila was hanging on to. She stumbled and almost upset my balance altogether. Carter staggered backwards against the plants and—oh well, you know the rest. The rotten barrier gave way and he was gone——"

"*Anyone* would believe that! Why should they doubt it?" Lavender asked earnestly.

"Because Sheila says I went for Carter, not he for me! She says I hit him and the blow sent him reeling backwards down the shaft. She says it was the force of the blow which broke the barrier, not that it was just rotten wood, nailed lightly across behind the palms by a careless workman in a hurry. They might have believed my word against hers if it had all come out at once, but after six months—six months while she's been living on my money, introduced into society by me and my relations—who is going to believe me after that?"

His voice rang with bitterness.

"But Sheila *can't* want to make trouble for—for either of us!"

"Can't she? That's where you make a mistake in your little pal! Oh, Sheila's sweet and sugary enough when things go the way she wants. Even I never guessed what she was up to. She made a mistake about how long her money would last—that's what upset her to begin with—"

"Do you mean the thousand pounds she got from you?" Lavender whispered.

"No. That was nothing—a mere flea bite. She would spend that in a couple of months, the way she was going on. No, I mean that when she first started she thought her own money would last her until she married. And her own money was only what poor Carter left her—there was never any more. They gave it out that her mother had come into money, but she never did. They started Sheila's Society career on less than fifteen hundred pounds—and it was gone in less than three months!"

"But why—why didn't you tell me all about it when Sheila first wanted your help?" Lavender wailed.

"Tell *you?* When you'd seen . . . what happened that night? When you couldn't trust me as it was—when you didn't really believe in my love at all, because of your infernal money? How could I tell you? The only chance I'd got of keeping you was to get rid of Sheila, whatever it cost me, and hope for things to right themselves. And so they would have . . . with anyone *but* Sheila! She got beside herself with vanity—couldn't be content to marry Bretton, who worshipped her for a bit, but kept him hanging on a hook while she looked out for someone still better. Now she's lost him—and serve her right——"

"But if she didn't really want him?"

"Oh, she's learnt a bit since then—about money, I mean. When Sheila started she thought fifteen hundred was a fortune. She's had two separate thousands out of me, and each time she miscalculated. Money burns a hole in her pocket. While she's got it, she spends. Then an evil day comes, and she's penniless. That's Sheila. She made up her mind to have Bretton and his millions—to sail for America and leave her mother and all her worries in England—but too late. He'd found her out. So now she's mad with disappointment. She's turned on me. I haven't enough money to quiet her, and I'm not sure that money could do it now. . . ."

"Grandfather will help me," Lavender murmured. "I will buy her silence . . . if she is really like that, and no more my friend!"

"Neither you nor your grandfather will do anything of the kind," Jock said curtly. "There's been enough blackmailing. It's stopped now, because Sheila's done her part already. The secret's out. Half-a-dozen people know—or think they know—the truth about Carter's death. It's only a question of time before the Crown takes it up and prosecutes. I don't mean to be here then——"

Lavender's heart seemed to turn over in her breast. She laid a small, shaking white hand over it, as though to keep it in check. A heavy coil of chestnut hair broke from its moorings and fell across her bare shoulder. She looked about sixteen, Jock thought, as she sat there trembling on the edge of her bed. It was impossible to believe her the same woman who had ordered him to fetch her chequebook and taken command of that horrible situation when Sheila had broken in upon their peace.

"Where . . . where do you mean to be?" she asked tremulously.

"I'm going abroad at once. Don't know where. But I don't mean to fill the daily papers with pictures of myself and you and our family. They won't find me, now I've got a start of them; and

they won't put much about me while I'm missing—see? They shall *never* find me—alive. So this is—good-bye!"

Lavender staggered to her feet and held out both hands to him.

"No—no—it's not good-bye at all. You're not going away, Jock—anyhow not without me. I—I love you!"

"Don't be a little fool, Lavender! I daresay you're sorry for me . . . there's been a lot of bad luck about it as well as damn' foolishness . . . but love and all that was over between us long ago! It's a jolly good thing for you that you cleared out when you did. It's made things easier for us both. My disappearance will be put down to marital unhappiness—for a bit, anyhow, until they get out a warrant for my arrest. Love! You've sacrificed too much for love already, kid. Don't be sentimental! Be thankful you're going to get rid of me so easily! Have a good time. You've my good wishes for the best of luck . . . and good-bye!"

He turned to the door, but Lavender threw herself upon him, clutching his strong hands with her weak ones, straining up to lay her cold white cheek against his.

"No, no—you don't understand . . . you don't understand! Love isn't over for me! I didn't go away because I had left off loving you, but because I loved you too much! You mustn't go—you mustn't go! Stay with me, Jock . . . you don't know how I've missed you—how I've wanted you——"

"But, my dear child——"

"Listen! I've got a plan . . . I've got something to propose! You mustn't go. You must stay with me and listen! Oh, Jock, don't look so changed—so hard—so cold! I tell you I've always loved you—always! I was jealous of Sheila . . . of course I was jealous—who wouldn't be? But now . . . now I understand the bond between you . . . I'm not jealous any more! The *money* never mattered, Jock! It was only that I was afraid you'd cared for the money more than me! I was jealous of that, too! Nothing else has ever mattered to me but your love! Don't you understand, Jock . . . don't you understand?"

For a moment he was silent. But his grimness relaxed, and he let her pull him back into the room.

"Jock! Sit down again . . . sit down and take me in your arms like you used to do! Tell me you love me! I can't think clearly until I know you haven't left off caring for me . . ."

"It would be better if I had," he said solemnly.

But he sat down on the edge of the disordered bed, and gathered her close into his strong arms, holding her like a little child tightly against his breast.

"I came here to say good-bye. I didn't really think you could help me about Sheila. I had to see you once more. I came to say good-bye . . ." he said monotonously.

Suddenly Lavender became convulsed with weeping. She held on to the lapels of his coat, shaken with sobs.

"Hush, dear, hush! . . . Don't!" Jock implored her.

"I'm not crying because I'm unhappy. It's because I'm so glad to have you here . . . because I've been so lonely, and I've wanted you so!" she gasped.

He covered her wet face with kisses.

Dawn.

THE servants rose early in Jacob Crick's London mansion. He always breakfasted at eight, and his housekeeper was of the old school of servants, insisting that the greater part of the housework should be complete before the master of the house was about.

Lavender knew that if she wished to leave her room unobserved, it must be by five or little after.

"Stayin' up all night makes people hungry," said Lavender, softly.

Fully dressed, she stole down the wide stairs and across the hall to the kitchens, where she had hardly ever been before.

The servants might miss the teapots, jugs, and cups and saucers on the dresser—she couldn't tell which might be her grandfather's or Mrs. Thomson's favourite china. She took up a tray, slipped into the larder for milk, bread and butter, cut some ham, turned some marmalade into a saucer, helped herself to tea and sugar from the grocery cupboard, and then fled to the drawing-room. Last night, during that uncomfortable interview with Lady Larke, she had stared absent-mindedly at the shelves of blue and white eggshell china brought from Japan by some sea-faring relative, wondering why they never used it. This morning it should be christened. The rest of her depredations in the kitchen were hardly likely to be discovered, but if she had selected Mrs. Thomson's own, cherished breakfast china, she could well imagine the outcry there would be!

Long before six the electric kettle in her room was boiling and tea was made in the tall blue teapot when Jock came out of the bathroom which led from her room. He was spruce and smiling—more his old self than he had looked last night. He was fair enough for the lack of a shave to be almost unnoticeable. Only a lingering weariness in those keen eyes which had always been so carelessly boyish told of the storm which was breaking over his head.

"Breakfast's ready!" Lavender said in a low voice. "Sit down there by the window, Jock, and talk low, for you can't tell how early the maids will be hounded out of bed. They won't pass this room, though, for they go down the other staircase. Here's your tea——"

"You shouldn't have got this. I could have fed outside. I thought it best to get away from where I'm known, but I'm not exactly hiding—yet!" said Jock, with his mouth full.

"Staying up all night makes people hungry—at least it makes me hungry!" Lavender said.

But for all that she didn't eat much. Thirstily swallowing her tea, she sat still with her hand in Jock's.

"It's rather fun, isn't it!" she whispered. "Meeting in secret at night . . . you and I who have a perfect right to be together! Stealing a breakfast when Grandfather would willingly invite you——"

"Are you so sure of that?" Jock asked grimly. "Not much goes on in London that Jacob Crick doesn't hear about. I'm willing to bet he knows all these rumours about me, even if he hasn't mentioned them to you!"

"Perhaps," Lavender agreed.

"He thinks—I'm certain—that the best thing for you to do is to cut me right out of your life. I still think the same in my heart. I can't see anything but trouble ahead, which you're bound to share if you persist in sticking to me——"

Stops Skin Pain

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Mr. Trapmore, of 3, Millis's Cottages, Bittom's Lane, Kingston-on-Thames, writes as follows: "On the first of January, 1923, an ulcer broke out on my ankle. It caused me terrible pain, but I continued at work for a few weeks until I completely broke down. For one time I was practically on my back. I used hot boracic fomentations for nearly six weeks, when the wound practically healed up. In a few days, however, it broke out again, and was nearly as bad as ever. Then I heard of Germolene, and decided to give it a trial. I am very pleased I did, for the first application was enough to inform me that I had secured the right stuff. The pain gradually went away; the wound began to heal, and I went to work again. My ankle is now quite well and continues so. I consider that Germolene is worth its weight in gold."

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Germolene

The Aseptic Skin Dressing

"I do persist. I mean I can't help it. I love you," she repeated. "Let me try to put things right——"

"I've had a lot of time on my hands for thinking since I cut the Army," Jock said unsteadily, pushing away his cup and plate. "Thinking hasn't been much in my line up to now. If it had been I should never have married you, you know. It seemed all right enough then. I was mad for you, and your money made it all plain sailing. I never stopped to think how mercenary I should look to you if . . . well, if things didn't go right. And Sheila . . . I've blamed her a lot, and she certainly is a queer card. But if it hadn't been Sheila, I daresay some other girl would have cropped up. I tell you, I never thought seriously about love and marriage—nor about anything else, for that matter. Wish I had now——"

He looked ruefully into Lavender's pale face.

"If I hadn't been an utter rotter you'd never have had any need to torment yourself," he said earnestly. "But you do believe now that I wasn't all you thought, don't you?"

"You know I do!"

"You'll trust me . . . whatever is said about me now?"

"Yes. And don't you see, Jock, that I don't care what they say—now? As long as I don't doubt your love, nothing else matters to me. I'm like that. I can't help it. If all the world says you murdered poor Tom Carter—it won't hurt me as it hurt me to think that you wanted Sheila instead of me! I'm like that! I believe . . . most women are!"

"Are they?" he said, and those bold, daring eyes of his which were still bold and daring in spite of everything spoke to her in a language that set her heart beating fast, and sent the colour rushing to her pale cheeks.

"Yes . . . disgrace or poverty or loneliness . . . I don't think any of those matter if a woman is quite, quite certain she comes first!"

"And that's what you've never been quite, quite sure of. . . ."

"Never . . . till now! Oh, Jock, I'm certain now! Somehow last night—because you came when I wanted you so badly—I became certain! And so now I don't mind the rest. That's why I feel able to face Sheila. . . . Listen! They've begun sweeping the stairs! That's the last job they do before breakfast. As soon as ever the gong rings and Grandfather is downstairs, they begin breakfast in the kitchen. And that's when I'll go down and open the door for you——"

"After all, if they do see me, there's no harm done! I'm your husband—"

"They shan't see. Nobody shall. It would be awkward, and I don't want a lot of explanations with Grandfather—yet. I'm going to lock these tea-things into my wardrobe so that nobody finds them before I can put them back. . . ."

A little later she went boldly downstairs, ready for breakfast. She could hear her grandfather's voice, rather testy, as it usually was until he had swallowed tea and toast, and read a morning paper, inside the dining-room. Jock's head appeared over the banisters, and she beckoned—then let him out into the freshness of the morning without a word.

A look passed between them, that was all; but it was a look very easily translated into words.

Lavender went nonchalantly into the dining-room and took her seat opposite her grandfather.

"I'm not going to business to-day, Grandfather," she said gently, pouring herself out some coffee.

The old man looked at her sharply from under his beetling eyebrows.

"Why not? Tired of it? Off to this ridiculous Pageant your swell society friends are strutting about in?"

"Of course not. I didn't even know it was going on—heard about it, of course, but I'd long ago forgotten about it! No, it's nothing to do with society, Grandfather. It's—urgent family affairs!"

The old man grunted his dissatisfaction.

"There's nothing frightfully important at the office, dear, and I've worked hard for over two months without a day off! It really isn't so bad! You said I should never be able to do a week's solid work without any gallivanting!" Lavender said soothingly.

"Well, I was beginning to think I was wrong, and that you were the one in a thousand women who can put business first!"

"I'm not," Lavender said rather sadly.

"Not? I thought you prided yourself on taking the place of the grandson I ought to have had?"

"So I do. But he wouldn't have put it *first* at my age. At least I hope not!"

Again the old man grunted disagreeably.

"'Urgent family affairs' first, I suppose?"

Lavender nodded.

"Good thing this is one of my good days; I'll go myself," said Jacob Crick, rising from his chair. "I'll be off and leave you to your private affairs!"

"Grandfather!" she said suddenly. "If—if I telephone you for a lot of money—more than I've got—ten or even twenty thousand pounds—would you let me have it? Would you trust me, and not ask questions, and let me work out the debt?"

He stared at her.

"Ten or twenty thousand?"

"It might be. I—I don't know yet. I might want it urgently. I'd rather get it straight from you than try to raise it in any other way. If I were to 'phone or come to you at the office. . . .?"

"A fairly casual way of treating money, isn't it? I presume you want ten or twenty thousand pounds for your urgent private affairs? Nobody is to know why you want such a paltry sum! You just 'phone for it—and I send an errand boy along with my cheque? Is that it?"

"Something like that," Lavender answered gravely. "I don't want to explain it all to you, Grandfather. I could—but I'd rather not . . . if you can trust me enough without!"

Again he was silent. Then he rang the bell and asked for his hat and coat. When he put them on he touched Lavender's shoulder lightly with the tips of his fingers and spoke in his most crotchety, casual tones.

"It'll be all right about the money. I'll see to it

as soon as I hear from you. Your salary while you're working for Crick's as you've been doing these last weeks is half my income. Get that worked out for you by the lawyers, and you'll find out how long before you've paid it off!"

He walked away from her, leaning heavily on his stick, and was outside the front door before she had time to answer.

Lavender discarded her business attire and put on a street-costume she had bought a few days before she had left Jock, and never worn. For once she resorted to some rouge, which carefully and lightly applied, hid the ravages of the past night. Then she ordered the motor and drove straight to Sheila's flat, which she had never entered since her illness.

"Miss Grey is dressing for the pageant, Ma'am. She's not seeing anyone to-day. And Mrs. Grey—she's dressing, too!" said the maid.

"I think Miss Grey will see me. I'll go up. I know my way," Lavender said firmly, and walked past the maid and upstairs.

She opened the bedroom door in spite of the whispered objections from behind her.

Sheila, as it happened, was alone. She swung round from the mirror, dressed in a scanty white lace petticoat, powder puff in hand. The white frock she was to wear as Emma, Lady Hamilton, lay on the bed, with curious little flat-heeled shoes, a long fringed pink scarf, and a wide-brimmed, blue-ribboned hat.

It was a day of triumph for Sheila. There were to be hundreds of beautiful women in the pageant, and hundreds of them would just be court ladies, or crowds, or peasants or servants. The representative "Beauties of Britain" were mostly the cream of society, and Sheila had been appealed to by many to play the part of the famous eighteenth century beauty.

"You!" she cried, her blue eyes narrowing as she saw Lavender.

Then she smiled as delightfully as ever Lady Hamilton did when her hero returned from the wars. There was no trace of enmity in her lovely face—no hint of the warface between her and her old friend.

"I didn't expect you, Lav. Sit down and tell me what you think of my frock!" she said. "Philips has just gone in to attend to Mother, she's coming out strong as some sort of aunt or something of mine! We don't know much about poor Emma's relations, but Mother's got a perfectly correct costume for the part, and made every stitch of it herself. . . Wait, I'll call her——"

"No, don't!" Lavender said gently.

She shut the door and stood with her back against it.

"I didn't come about clothes. I forgot all about the pageant to-day till Grandfather reminded me. I came on private affairs, Sheila, so don't let your Mother interrupt us for a minute. Listen! . . . I've seen Jock. I know from him what it is that's made him give you money and all that. I don't want to go into it again. But I do want——"

(*Continued on page 32.*)

An engrossing long, complete romance that will thrill you from the first to the last chapter.

HER HEART'S SECRET

The great dazzling world opened at her feet—all the things that she had longed for: riches, lovely clothes, jewels—were hers at last. But—love beckoned, and soon its perfumed flames swept over her . . . . what did her heart say?

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PAM'S PAPER

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Love.

"IN those days," added Linthwaite, "every clue the American authorities got to this great clearing-house for jewels was a blind alley. Somebody was receiving all the proceeds of gigantic robberies and cleverly handling them. Somebody was directing every big coup in the States—where jewel collections are plentiful, because the folk are wealthy. It was impossible to get at this man from the *outside*. The only way was from the *inside*. A thief might catch this master thief, where detectives failed. They tried me."

Margaret looked up. "So you are a thief, after all, Jerry?"

He took the hand she reached up to him. "Perhaps—and perhaps not. Actually, I am an officer of the American Secret Service. I had to establish a reputation, notoriety, what you will. There were only a few people in the secret. A robbery was faked. I went up for it, and did my term good and hard. When I got out, there was a murder committed. We never caught the real criminal unfortunately, but there were circumstances which were able to be engineered so that suspicion was cast on me. I "evaded" the chair, but went to Sing Sing again. The judge who sentenced me had no idea I was anything but a hardened criminal. When I came out I went on with my heinous work. I specialised in jewels. The police hunted me for every jewel theft that ever was. I became famous in the underworld, and I got to know every man who stole jewels. So I gained the confidence of all, and so real clues came to my hands, and I worked on real facts. Those facts led me to London—and to Cap d'Argent. Here, my case was almost complete. I wanted only circumstantial evidence. That I got by making a list of our friend's collection—which he so amusingly placed at my disposal, thinking me a jewel thief he could tempt to robbery. Unfortunately, this lady saw me making notes of what he had, instead of taking what he had, mentioned it to him, and he knew that the game was up unless he did something swiftly. And that's all—except that I arrest the Count Malvoni for receiving, for being an accessory before, during and after the fact, in the murder of Monsieur Vaudret; and . . . I ask him to account for the disappearance of various people about whom I shall ask him a lot of awkward questions when the proper time comes. Monsieur Gauchin, you may want to see my credentials. I can present them to you at the right time, and they can be verified by the American Embassy in Paris. I think that's all."

Gauchin touched Malvoni on the shoulder.

"Come on!" he said.

But Malvoni did not move. They found, in the ring on his third left hand finger, a tiny spike controllable by a delicate spring. The ring was hollow, and what fluid might have been in it was gone.

Malvoni was past answering all earthly tribunals.

* * * * *

There was sunshine in the Champs Elysees, and all Paris was promenading beneath the trees.

On two chairs near the Theatre des Ambassadeurs sat Margaret and Linthwaite.

"And why didn't you tell me from the first?" asked Margaret reproachfully.

He smiled—she called it "grinned."

"I always had a motto—never trust a secret to a woman. I'm real sorry, dear, but I just had to stick to it. You see, if a breath had gone round that I was not what I seemed—say, back in London—every crook in Britain would have been at me as a police spy. I had to risk things."

"And now . . . ?" she said.

"The risk's over. I always said this would be my last job. I've cleaned up more dollars than I can count in rewards that were offered for the recovery of the jewels. and there's a fine automobile business just waiting for a really clever fellow to run it."

Margaret eyed him reprovingly. "Are you meaning yourself when you refer to the clever fellow?"

"Sure! Don't you think I was clever to get you?"

"I don't know. But—you're awfully nice, anyhow."

He turned and kissed her, and promenading Paris, seeing it, smiled.

For Paris loves a lover.

Have you begun our great new Serial, "The Branded Wife"? Everyone will enjoy this great story. Make sure that all your friends are reading it.

CHILDREN'S COMPETITION RESULT.

JUMBLED FLOWERS.—No. 3.

C. Morgan, Bryngwyrdd House, Argoed, Mon.
M. Austin, 90, Wingrove-av., Fenham, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
L. Armstrong, 134, Ravenhill-road, Belfast.
N. Pattullo, 9, Park-place, Ancrum-road, Lochee, Dundee.
B. Chambers, 71, Ashford-road, Swindon.
D. Portlock, Glen Lee Farm, Keighley.
M. Hawksworth, 7, Montgomery-st., Sparkbr'k, Birmingham.
J. Wright, High-grove, Greenfield, N'. Oldham.

GLAMOUR—(*Continued from page* 30.)

"You want me to 'hold my hand,' as they say in old novels! You want me to put up with your having taken Harry Bretton away from me, and prevented Jock helping me, and cold-shouldering me in front of all the world? That's what you want to ask me, isn't it? To be as sweet and Christian and forgiving as you are yourself?"

"No—not at all!" Lavender chipped in crisply. "I never thought of appealing to you in that way. You see, I understand you a great deal better now, Sheila, than I ever did in the old days of our friendship! No, I just want to know . . . how much will you take to wash out the whole horrid business? You *can't* want to ruin Jock. It can't be an actual pleasure to you to torment him—and me! You must know in your heart I never took Mr. Bretton away from you—I don't want him enough! But I know now how much you want money, and I'm here to give it you—as much as you ask—in return for a signed declaration that you know Jock to be perfectly innocent—"

"But I *don't* know! I say he did murder——"

Lavender held up her hand.

"Don't! It's not safe to talk like that if you want what I'm offering you! Will you sign that paper, Sheila—and ask me what you think it's worth?"

"As much as I choose?" Sheila asked slowly.

There was a look of calculation in those fire-blue eyes of hers that had never shone in the eyes of Lord Nelson's love.

"Ten—twelve thousand pounds?" she added lightly, expecting an exclamation of horror from the quiet girl with her back against the door.

"Yes. Twelve thousand pounds—my Grandfather's cheque for twelve thousand pounds—if you'll promise, Sheila, and mean it honestly, and write it down as well——"

"All right," Sheila said briskly. "I'd write anything in the world for as much money as that; I must get some somewhere, you know, or I can't possibly carry on! Harry Bretton was a bit of a shock. I always thought I could marry him to avoid bankruptcy. I can't now, and so far I haven't found anyone quite up to my requirements. So I'll give up my hold over Jock, because I shan't need it with so much behind me! Have you got it about you now—loose?"

She laughed—that airy, silvery laugh of hers that sounded as though she hadn't a care or a calculation in her composition.

"I can get it in half-an-hour if you'll let me telephone——"

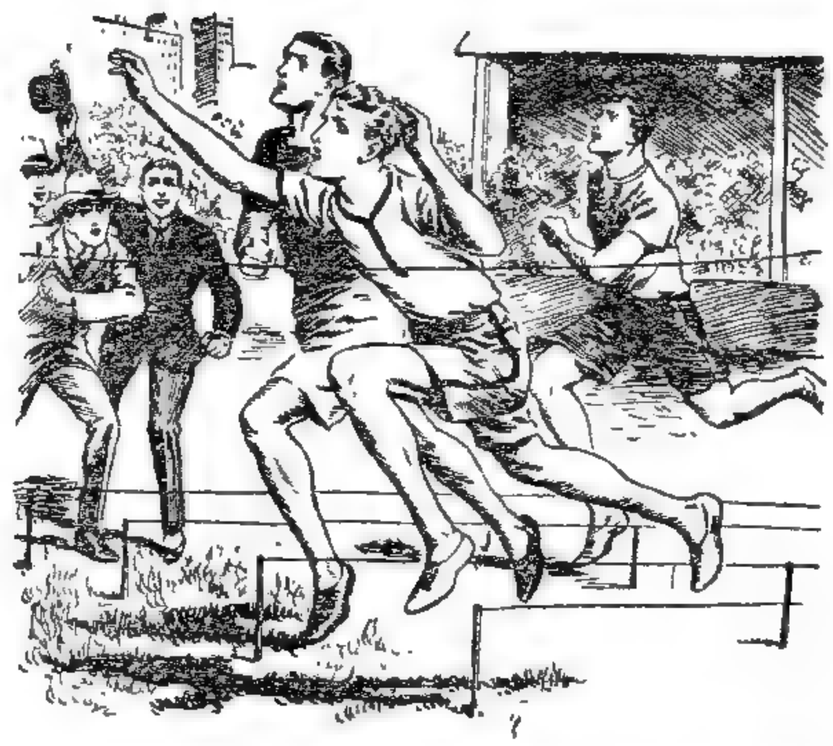
"We've got to be off in twenty minutes, Mother and I. I haven't time to talk things over and sign papers. Come to-night at eleven—or shall I come to you?—and we'll get it fixed up! That'll do, won't it?"

"I suppose so——"

"You needn't be afraid I'll do Captain Haslam any harm in between this and then! I won't whisper a word against him! I'll go farther than that. I'll make friends with Harry Bretton—if I can!—and take back as much as I can of what I told him. I don't know for certain, but I think

(*Continued on page* 36.)

THE BEST BOYS' WEEKLY ON THE BOOKSTALLS



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BOYS' MAGAZINE

NOW ON SALE ***Price 2d.***

PLAYTIME TALES

THE LITTLE WILD FOLK.

Squeak ! Squeak ! Squeak !

"HI! Stop, Mr. Foxie!" cried wee Elaine. "Don't you know that I'm the Queen of the Woodland Folk?" But greedy Mr. Foxie took no notice at all; he raced quickly out of the wood towards the Common, pulling Elaine after him.

By this time the moon had disappeared and the sun was waking up behind the tall foxgloves, and Elaine suddenly noticed a big sandy hole in the ground underneath the foxglove roots.

"This must be Mr. Foxie's den!" she thought to herself. "Oh dear! What shall I do? I'd better blow my bugle horn; it's the last chance!"

So when Mr. Foxie was looking the other way she pulled the horn out of her pyjama pocket and blew with all her might.

"My whiskers! What's that?" Mr. Foxie quivered all over and suddenly let go of Elaine's hand. "The hunt is up!" he exclaimed nervously. "I heard the huntsman's horn quite near—I'm off!" and without another thought of wee Elaine he turned tail and fled.

"Whew! What a narrow escape!" chuckled Elaine. "I'd better fly! There may be other Foxies in that hole!"

She hurried quickly past the hole, but on the way she heard a timid little Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!

"That sounds like one of the Woodland Folk in trouble!" thought wee Elaine. "I wonder if I dare just peep?"

It was a dangerous thing to do, for Mrs. Foxie might be at home waiting for her husband—but Elaine bravely risked it and crept down the hole, all along a sandy passage leading to a tidy little kitchen—Oh, Cheers! *The kitchen was empty!* There wasn't a sign of a Fox anywhere to be seen, but the little Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! kept on.

"I believe someone is shut up here!" said Elaine to herself. "Well, now I've *come* I won't go home until I've found out who it is!" She searched on the dresser all among the cups; she peered under the kitchen table, and behind the armchairs—but no one was there; and at last she unlocked the larder door and under the meat-covers she saw—*two poor little Mousie Boys!* They squealed with fright when they saw Elaine.

"Now don't be alarmed, little pals!" Elaine said. "I'm the new Queen of the Woodland Folk, and I've come to save you from old Foxie!"

"Oooh! Thank you, your Majesty!" shouted both the little Mousie Boys, hugging her with joy.

"Hush!" ordered Elaine. "Old Foxie may come back any minute. Let's creep!"

So hand in hand they crept along the sandy passage. Alas! Just outside the hole, Mr. Foxie was holding an excited conversation with Mrs. Foxie.

"My dear, I c-c caught a little girl!" he gasped. "But I h-had to let her g-go because I h-h-heard the h-h-h-huntsman's horn and I was s-so f-f-f-frightened!"

"Rubbish!" laughed Mrs. Foxie. "Come along into the house at once!"

Elaine and the poor little Mousie Boys turned and scuttled back into the hole

* * * * *

Do you think they will be caught in a trap? It looks like it, doesn't it? But wait—*Mr. Foxie had a secret back staircase.*

Aren't you longing to know what happened to Elaine and the Mousie Boys, kiddies? You will find some more of this lovely story in Next Week's "Week End Novels."

CHILDREN'S COMPETITION CORNER.

KIDDIES! DO YOU WANT A SPLENDID EVER-READY PENCIL?

HERE is a splendid chance for you, children. Every week I am going to give you a simple competition, and to the eight children who send me in the best answers I shall award splendid Ever-Ready Pencils. Everyone who gets one of these Pencils will be absolutely delighted. For this week's competition I am giving you the names of eight flowers in which the letters are jumbled. Can you read them?

CHANITHY NOVICERA PRETHIOLEO GLIN
BRANEVE TRIMLOWK DRAGANIE AALAZE

Write your answers clearly on a piece of paper, and don't forget to add your name and address. All attempts must reach me before August 1, and must be delivered to—

UNCLE DICK, No. 7, *Week End Novels*, 18, Charterhouse-street, LONDON, E.C.1.

THE . . . MYSTERY WOMAN

Tell Her Your Dreams And Troubles, And She Will Solve Them For You.

I HAVE just heard the thrilling news that three of my readers are going to be married next week! I wish them the very best of luck, and much happiness and prosperity throughout the whole of their new lives.

Now I am going to give them—and you—some traditional superstitions and observances for the happy day.

If you see a flock of birds—especially swallows—on your wedding morning before you leave the house, it is a sign that you will have few troubles and plenty of friends. Should the birds circle over you on the way to the church, riches will come your way in the near future.

"*Happy the bride that the sun shines on,*" is an old saying, but if the sun emerges behind a cloud and shines directly on the altar while the actual wedding is taking place, the bride who is standing there will be the specially favoured one of the kind fate which looks after happy marriages.

"Who is going to rule the roost?" A very potent query! Well, you needn't worry about that if you conceal some small thing belonging to your beloved in your wedding frock! He may be the nominal head of the house, but *you'll* be the real "boss"!

It is very lucky for you to notice a cross-eyed man or woman on the way to church. If they look poor, give them a piece of silver—and be sure to take several pieces of silver with you in any case.

DREAMING DORA.—What lucky dreams you have been having lately, Dora! This last one of drifting clouds betokens a safe return from over the sea of a loved one, and happy reunions with friends whom you have not seen for long years. No, I have never been to Birmingham, but I am sure it must be a very nice place. Best of luck!

SAILOR GIRL.—A young man who gives you a present of jewellery in your dream will not always do the same in your waking hours! I am afraid that your dream does not mean that you will soon be engaged, as you suggest, my dear, but it *does* mean that someone whom you have grown to care for is thinking of you, and you will soon have a surprise.

WORRIED SALLY.—The cause of those dark rings under your eyes, Sally dear, is anæmia, I should think. You must get a good tonic from a doctor, and take plenty of exercise.

UNHAPPY JOAN.—I think that this boy is very shy, my dear Joan. He is probably very fond of you, as he likes to be in your company so frequently, but do not be unhappy because he does not declare his love! Many boys take a long time to make up their minds about a girl—so don't show him, whatever you do, that you are anxious, and I am sure that it will all come right in the end. My best wishes to you, and next time you write to me, let it be "*Happy* Joan!"

PEGGY POTTS.—Your dream of being blind was not a terrifying omen, Peggy, for it shows that you will have your eyes opened to lies and deceit. You will recognise who your true friends are, and will be able to avoid those who would do you harm. I was delighted to hear from you again, my dear. Yes, your sister wrote to me a fortnight ago—I am glad that she is getting on so well.

TIRED TONY.—Poor Tony—it is so hard to give up eating sweets if you are so fond of them! But I am afraid that you will never get thinner unless you *do* give most of them up, as there is nothing so fattening as sweets and rich cakes. Yes, dancing is splendid for your purpose, but I should certainly try to walk to your work every morning, if I were you. That is the best exercise. My kindest regards.

RED BIRD (Nottingham).—I am always delighted to hear from my men readers. I have a great number, you know, so you needn't be shy about writing! Your dream means that an unexpected piece of news is coming to you, which will distress you a little at first, but which will be the forerunner of better things.

Mrs. F. P. (Caledonian-road, Holloway).—Hearty congratulations on your wonderful success! I think you did splendidly, and I hope that your future undertakings will be blest in the same manner—but I'm sure they will be. Kind thoughts, my dear friend.

MYSTERY WOMAN COUPON No. 136.
This Coupon must accompany every letter addressed to the Mystery Woman,
WEEK END NOVELS, August 2, 1924.

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Another £200 MUST BE WON FOR NAMING 24 WELL-KNOWN CHRISTIAN NAMES

Six Pictures a Week for Four Weeks.

We shall award £120 to the sender of the most correct list of solutions and divide the remaining £80 among those sending in lists next in order of merit.

The pictures below represent well-known Christian names. Can you discover them?

HOW TO WIN!

In the space beneath the pictures write clearly in ink what you think each picture represents. Every detail shown in the picture should be considered. For example, the correct solution to this specimen picture is EDWIN.

The pictures represent the names either as they are spelled or as they are pronounced.

When you have solved this set of pictures, fill in your solutions and add your name and address in the space provided.

This Set of Pictures completes the Competition. Twenty-four have now appeared. Pin them together; see that your name and address are written on each of the four coupons, and send them in a sealed envelope to "Puzzle Series, No. 5," 18, Charterhouse-street, London, E.C.1, to arrive not later than **THURSDAY, JULY 31.**

The first prize of **£120** will be awarded to the reader from whom we receive a correct list of all the names. If no reader sends in a completely correct list, the **£120** will be awarded to the competitor who sends in the **most** correct list. The remaining **£80** will be divided between readers whose lists are next in order of merit.

The Editor's decision on all matters relating to this competition is absolutely final and legally binding and is an express condition of entry.

You may send in as many entries as you wish, but each entry must comprise the four weekly sets.

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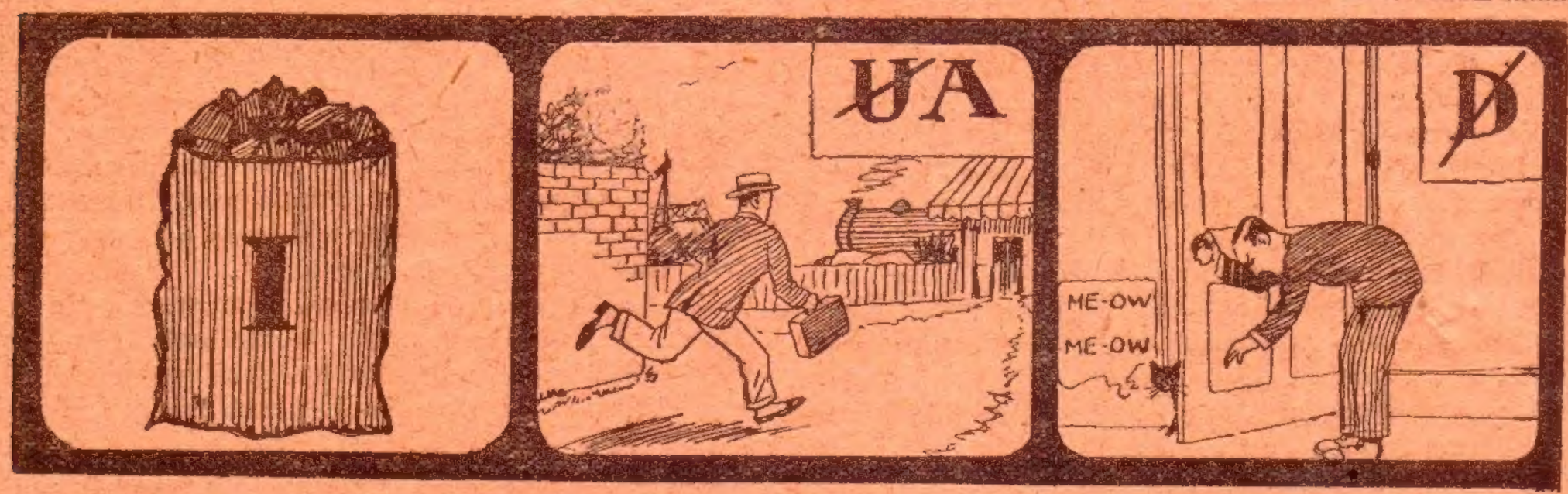

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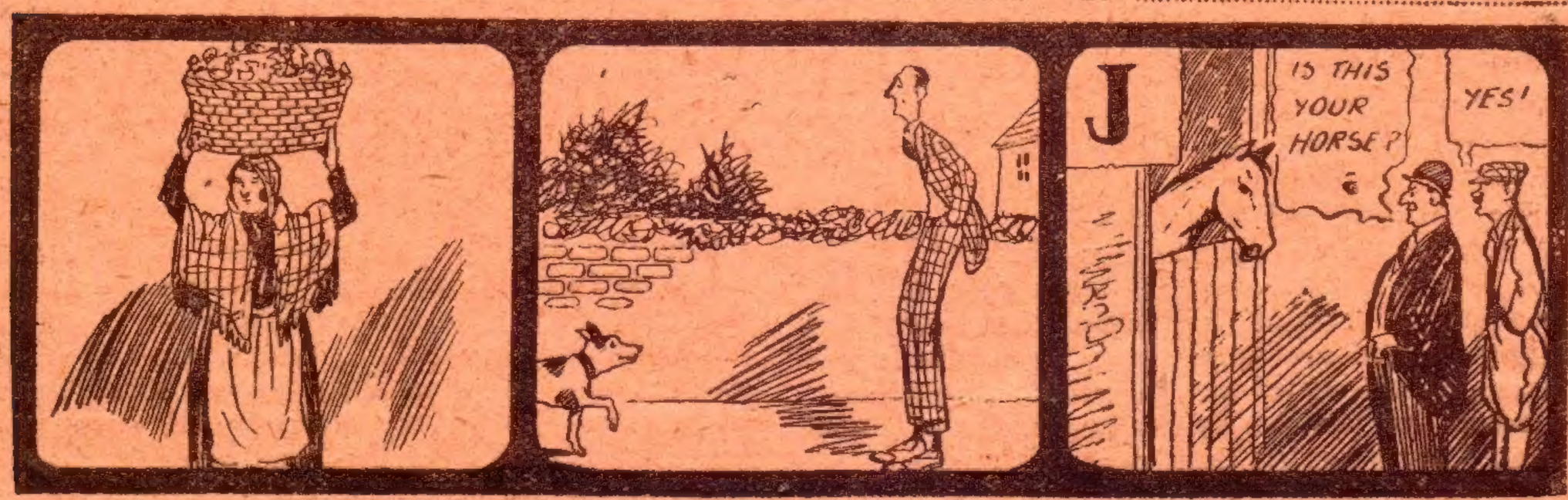

22 ..... 23 ..... 24 .....

I agree to abide by the rules and to accept the decision of the Editor as final and legally binding in all respects.

NAME .....

2/8/24. ADDRESS .....

GLAMOUR—(*Continued from page* 32).

it is Harry who is spreading scandal against Jock, Lavender. And you ought to know best why that is——"

Lavender opened the door abruptly.

"Good-bye," she said. "I'll come here to-night at eleven with that cheque. You *promise*, Sheila?"

"I promise," said Sheila lightly, and she took up her powder puff once more. "I'm not likely to forget! You don't know what a weight you've taken off my mind! A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush! I have got dozens singing ever so sweetly to me from the bushes, but I'd rather have your Grandfather's cheque in my hand than any of 'em! If only I'd been born you instead of me, Lav, nobody would ever have seen this nasty side of my character. I shouldn't have known I had it myself. It's a shame I should be forced to descend so low—don't you think it is?"

But Lavender did not answer. She sped downstairs and out to the waiting motor.

In the afternoon she went to the office and took up her work where she had left it the day before. Work was the best possible way to pass the long hours of forced inactivity. She spoke a few words to her Grandfather about the twelve thousand pounds he had promised, and he wrote a cheque in his rapid, accurate fashion and tossed it on to her desk, without a word.

They dined together that night, talking only of business schemes. At ten, Jacob Crick retired to bed in his punctual fashion, and at half-past, Lavender slipped on her coat and hat and went quietly out of the house.

Jock was walking up the steps. They had arranged that she should let him in to avoid explanations. It was time enough when all were well to confide in Jacob Crick. It was a little too early to start for Sheila's flat. They would wait a few minutes and go together.

"Come in," Lavender said softly, and led him into the drawing-room. "It's going to be all right. I've managed her beautifully. Oh, Jock, I am so happy! I feel—I feel that it's all coming right now—now that I understand you at last!"

"I've changed," he said painfully, "and that's why you understand me. You couldn't have understood me as I used to be—selfish, unthinking devil——"

She laid one hand on his mouth.

"You mustn't abuse the man I love!"

It is a dangerous thing to defy Fate with an assertion of coming happiness. Lavender had hardly finished explaining to Jock that Sheila was coming at eleven to sign "anything they chose" in return for the cheque she waved triumphantly before him, when the front door bell rang.

"I wonder if she has come here after all! Wait here. I'll see!" she whispered.

But it wasn't Sheila she met in the hall—it was Sheila's mother, still in her pageant costume, a long grey cloak over her satin dress.

"Sheila isn't with me, and won't be home for some time. She went home with Lord Carrel to be introduced to his parents," she said slowly, and Lavender felt that she was rolling the title on her tongue with relish.

"You have come instead?" she asked. "I was just starting out."

"Sheila said you would understand when I told you of her engagement," Mrs. Grey said importantly. "She and Lord Carrel only settled it to-night, and you are one of the first to know. She sent you this letter——"

It was a note scribbled in pencil in Sheila's careless handwriting.

Dear Lav,—I never thought I should pull this off. I don't want your cheque now. I am going to be married almost at once—Mother will tell you all about that. She's frightfully pleased. As I shall be living in London, not America, I prefer to remain your friend, and Jock's. If I took that cheque, I couldn't, could I? But as it is now, you can't afford to quarrel with me or ignore me, CONSIDERING WHAT I KNOW ABOUT HIM, CAN YOU? *Therefore I think I had better not sign anything, and manage without the money. Explain to Jock, won't you?*

SHEILA.

By the way, people are already talking rather nastily about him. I warned him not to go against me. He did, and I told three people what I know. I suppose this is the result. If he'd kept on good terms with me it would never have happened.

Lavender read the letter through again, very slowly. Her heart sank like a stone in her breast. She was conscious of Mrs. Grey's coldly triumphant eyes upon her . . . and then suddenly an angry voice rang through the silent house.

"I heard you! I guessed you were here last night, you skulking dog! Come out of it—or I shall send for the police to haul you out? I thought you'd done about the best thing you could do, clearing out of my girl's life altogether! But now you're turning up again, you murderer, I'll have no pity on you——"

Lavender fled from the library into the hall. Outside the drawing-room door her Grandfather and Jock faced one another, an equal fury in each set face. Servants clustered in the background, the hall-door swung open and showed the lights of Mrs. Grey's car and the driver standing by it. People outside the house and inside were listening . . .

The furious old man drew his dressing-gown more closely round his shrunken throat and rattled his heavy stick upon the polished floor.

"'Murderer,' I said Come along out of it, Haslam, and get your dirty linen washed somewhere else—not in my house! I'll keep your wife, because she's my flesh and blood, and got a backbone of her own . . . but I won't have her murdering blackguard of a husband across my threshold!"

"Murderer" he calls him! What can Jock do? How can he clear himself of this terrible charge? Next week's instalment of this thrilling story will amaze you.

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